ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS UPDATE!

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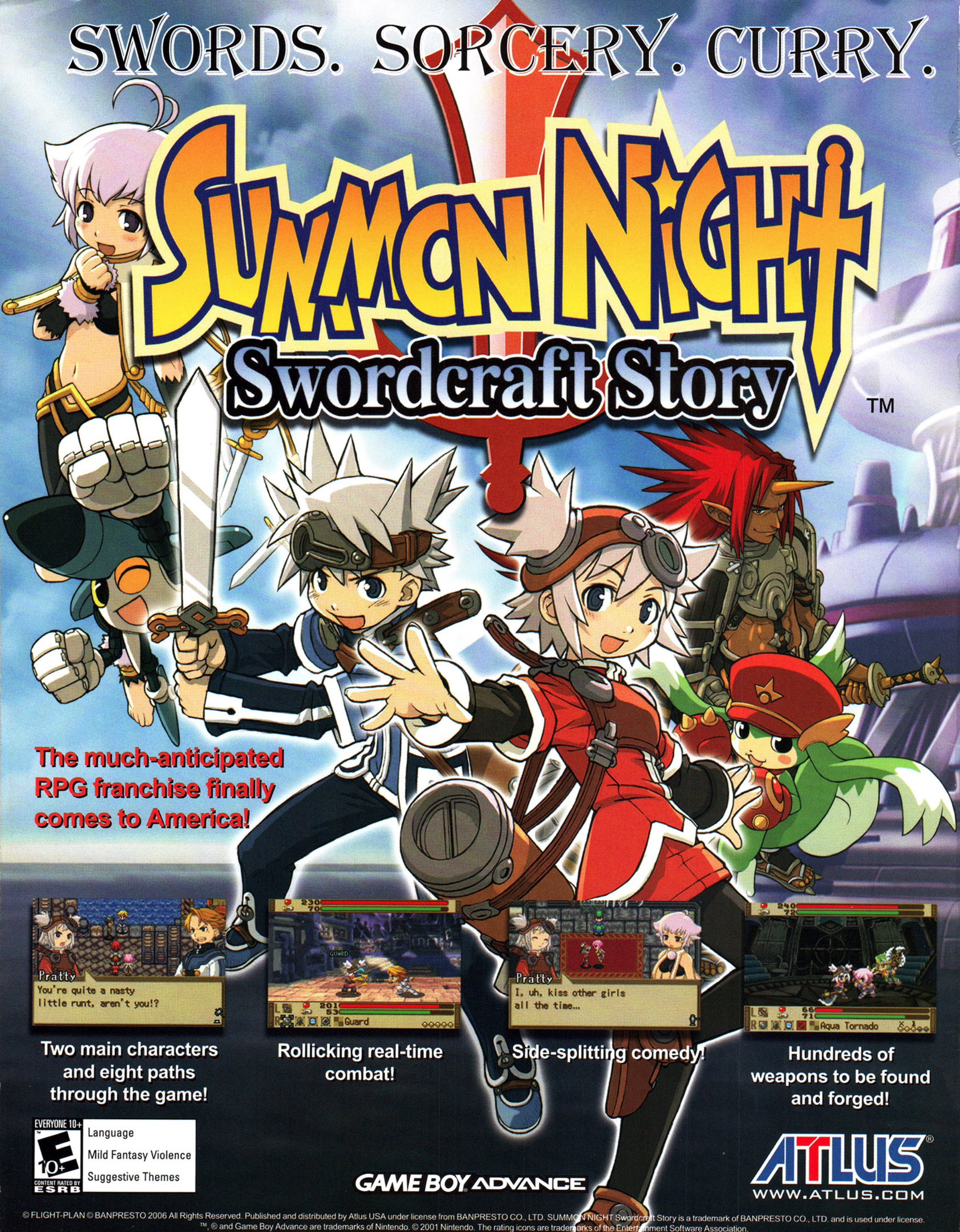

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Language
Mild Fantasy Violence
Suggestive Themes

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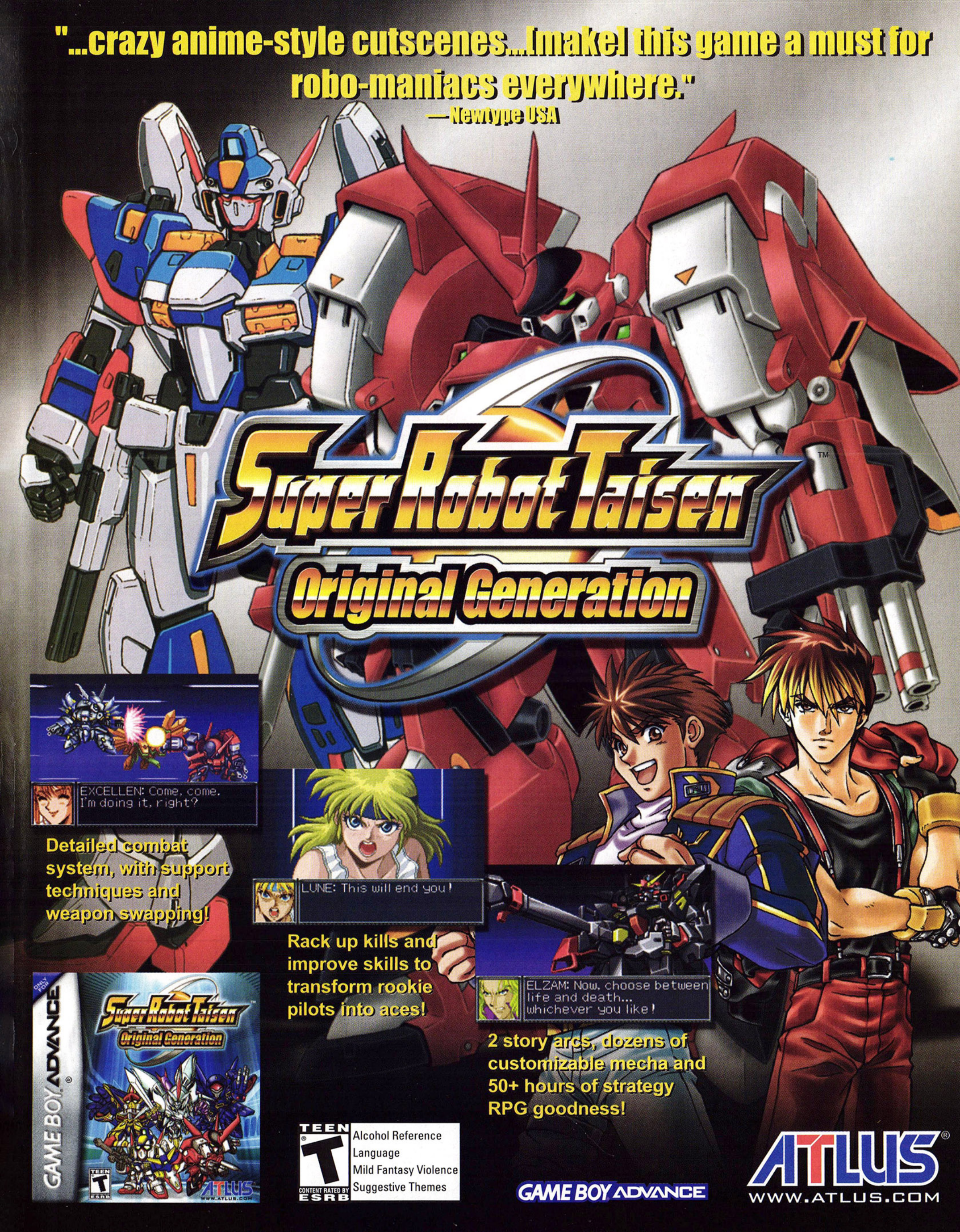

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Alcohol Reference
Language
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NINTENDO POWER

CONTENTS AUGUST 2006

FEATURES

22 Smash Files
Our monthly look at the fighters of Super Smash Bros. Brawl begins with Konami's superagent, Snake.

34 Prime Directive
We sit down with members of the Metroid Prime 3: Corruption team to get the inside scoop on the gorgeous Wii title.

38 Field of Dreams
Perhaps no game demos were more inspirational at E3 than Wii Sports and Wii Music. We take a closer look at both.

44 A Hero in Motion
E3 kicked loose a whole bunch of info about Twilight Princess. Get a fresh peek at the most anticipated game of the year.

52 The Top 25 Wii Want
Our Wii eager meter is blowing up. We try to organize our top titles into one tidy list.

64 Cubism
Despite all the Wii and DS chatter, news of the GameCube's demise has been highly exaggerated.

68 All Wound Up
Following the frenetic puzzler for the GBA, Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2 brings more adorable antics to the Nintendo DS.

72 Force of Nature
Add a dash of dungeon crawler and a sprinkle of multiplayer: Children of Mana is giving the series a whole new flavor.

76 Three's a Charm
To celebrate its North American release, FINAL FANTASY III is undergoing a massive renovation. We check in on the progress.

80 Command Performance
Sharpshooter Fox McCloud and his pals hop back in the cockpit for a quick spin around the DS universe.

No fair! You got a sword! All I got is this red cap!

52
Beating up Mario again, huh? There goes that exclusive Meta Knght game.

76
If only watching the nature channel were this cool.

72
Umm, it looks like your earrings are ready to be picked.

80
The heroic return of Fox "Don't call me Slippy" McCloud.

What's more deadly—my ship or my mesmerizing green eyes?

Yeah, it's just like a tennis racket, but you don't have to swing so freakin' hard! Pg. 38

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NINTENDO POWER

CONTENTS

Ninjas, swords, and six-foot-tall columns of fire? Just another day at Nintendo Power.

24
TENCHU KEEPS A SECRET; ELITE AGENTS DROP A BEAT; KIRBY STANDS ALONE; POKéMON GOES UNDERGROUND; CAPCOM GETS INTO THE MIX; SPONGEBOB DINES OUT; YOSHI AND BABY MARIO REUNITE; ERAGON GETS HATCHED; MAGICAL VACATION GOES TO WORK; AND MORE

DEPARTMENTS

8 Pulse
We reminisce about the exploits of Captain N, explore a side of Toad we've never seen before, and question our manhood.

14 News
You won't believe how many games are popping up on the schedule. Plus, the Big N's frontman gets a new gig.

24 Previews
Pokémon, SpongeBob, Kirby, and DBZ highlight our big collection of post-E3 previews.

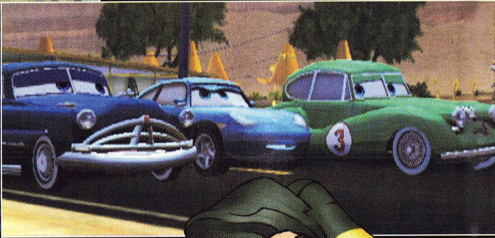
83 Reviews

90 Community
Envy is a sin, but we'll forgive you for wanting to swap places for a week with our E3 contest winners.

94 Playback
We celebrate the 15-year anniversary of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, and wax nostalgic about the most underrated games of its day.

96 Contacts
97 Next Month

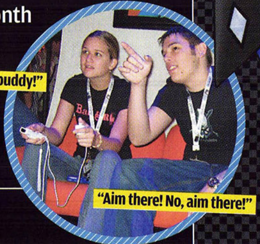
28
Hot red ninja suits are a little impractical, but oh so stylish.



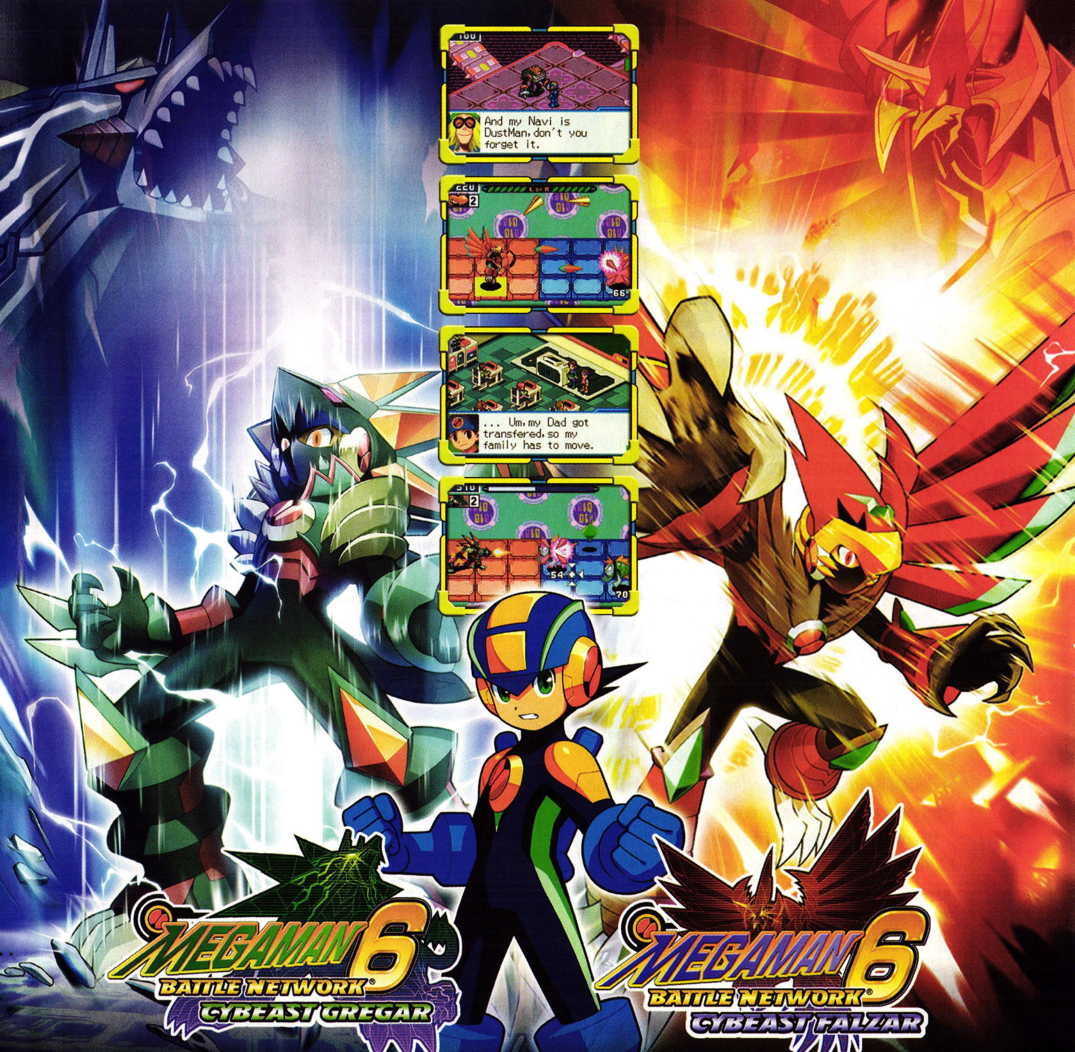
84
Dude, why you always up in my grill?

14
With a face like that, there's no way he's innocent.

I just hope they don't replace my scarf with a noose.


"Wait your turn, buddy!"

"Aim there! No, aim there!"



And my Navi is DustMan, don't you forget it.

... Um, my Dad got transfered, so my family has to move.

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Pulse

READ BETWiiN THE LINES

If you were to ask people to name the hit of E3, most years you'd likely get a different answer from everyone you asked. Not so this year. Wii dominated. It wasn't supposed to go down that way, at least not according to industry pundits. PS3 was supposed to be the big deal, and Nintendo's Wii would be the interesting sideshow. But the lines told a very different tale—people waited for up to five hours just to get into the Wii demo area, compared to 20 minutes for a look at a PS3 demo. You do the math. In this month's issue, we show you why those showgoers were so enthralled by Wii. We list our early faves, explore the appeal of Wii Sports, walk you through the Wii demo of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, and reveal details about Metroid Prime 3: Corruption with a developer interview and exclusive screenshots.

Wii may have hogged the spotlight at this year's E3, but the DS's showing was equally remarkable due to an unprecedented number of huge titles. This month we're focusing on Star Fox Command, FINAL FANTASY III, Children of Mana, and Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis—all incredible additions to the DS library. But they're just a drop in the bucket if you consider the fall arrivals of The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass, Yoshi's Island 2, Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team, and Elite Beat Agents (and that's just a partial list of Nintendo titles). Third-party publishers will release another 70-plus DS games. Frankly, I can't recall any platform in video game history having so many great games sandwiched into one season. Lucky us.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

ROYAL TREATMENT

With the announcement that Twilight Princess will be on both the GCN and Wii, I need to know this: If I'm planning on getting a Wii, and I currently own a GCN, would there be any point to me getting the game for both systems? Would I benefit from any extra gameplay or anything, or should I just get the Wii version?

Tyler S.
Oregon

The two versions of Twilight Princess will be virtually identical in terms of content. The Wii version will take advantage of the system's unique controller, of course, and support both wide-screen and progressive scan displays. Other than that, there shouldn't be any significant differences.

DUBIOUS SUBTITLES

Having DS titles that begin with "D" and "S" is kinda cool. It brings out some originality. But I'm worried about what happens when we run out of good word combinations. How long until we're playing Grand Theft Auto: Driving over Squirrels and Duke Nukem: Dying of Syphilis?

Johnny
via the Internet

Or The Legend of Zelda: Didgeridoo of Salvation. Or Metal Gear Solid: Dangerous Stubble. Or Castlevania: Ditty of Suffering. Or . . . OK, we'll stop now.

BOOB TUBE

Have any of you ever been on TV before, and if so, on what show?

Deckmaster360
via the Internet

As a matter of fact, NP's own Pete Michaud was supposed to play the lovechild of Skippy and Mallory in the last season of Family Ties *until producers nixed the idea at the last minute.*

MISSING CREATURES

I've been looking forward to the game Black & White Creatures, and following it closely in the magazine. I noticed that it's not on the Game Watch Forecast anymore. What's up with that? Was the game canceled?

Jake H.
via the Internet

Sadly, it appears as if Black & White Creatures has fallen off the radar. While not officially canceled, the game was nowhere to be seen at this year's E3, and Majesco representatives have been unable to give us an update on the title in quite some time.

THE GAME MASTER

I noticed the ad for the DVD collection of *The Super Mario Bros. Super Show* [in a recent issue] and I plan to go out and pick it up. Do you know if there is also a plan to release the *Captain N* series [on DVD]? I remember that each week I couldn't wait to see new episodes of that show. Combining some of my favorite video game characters into a cartoon was probably one of the best ideas ever.

Mike
via the Internet

Perhaps, but a jive-talking Mother Brain and Simon Belmont dressed in a flight suit might qualify as some of the worst ideas ever. In any case, the first two seasons of Captain N *will be released on DVD later this year.*

MOTION SICKNESS

I have an important question about the Wii's motion-sensitive controller. Will it be used in *every single* game that comes out? Because my friend says Sonic will use it, and I can see myself sucking horribly at it, which wouldn't be too much fun.

Rebecca
via the Internet

Although we expect the vast majority of Wii titles to utilize the motion-sensitive controller, we've already seen one exception with Super Smash Bros. Brawl. Nintendo has suggested that some multiplatform titles might use the classic-style controller as well. As for Sonic Wild Fire, it does use the standard Wii remote, but it seems pretty intuitive, and it was a heck of a lot of fun at E3.

BAD MUSHROOM

I was wondering if Toad has a dark side. Maybe in his free time he makes weapons or something.

Jay
via the Internet

Not a chance. Toad is probably the gentlest, most purehearted character in all of video games. We doubt he'd even know how to wield a weapon.

A long time ago my parents bought me an SNES bundled with Super Mario World. I loved the game and played it day and night. My brother was only two years old at the time, but as he grew older, I'd try to get him to play. It was so funny, because he was scared to play. Every time he played, he was afraid of getting hit by a koopa or falling off a cliff. When he first tried and lost, he cried and wouldn't pick up the controller for a long time. But a few months later, he tried again and slowly got used to it and started having fun. Soon enough, he was kicking my butt in Street Fighter! Anyway, the moral of this story is to try something new. Sure, the radical ideas presented by Nintendo's upcoming console may seem scary to us longtime gamers, but we'll never know what we're missing if we don't give it a chance.

Rahim H.
via the Internet

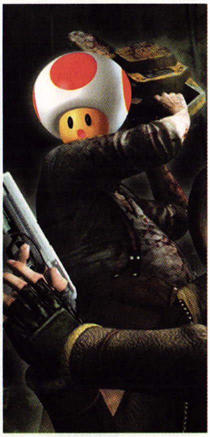
We're not sure your brother is going to appreciate this letter, Rahim, but you make a good point.

THE FACE OF EVIL

What is under the chainsaw guy's burlap sack in Resident Evil 4?

Olorin
via the Internet

Through advanced imaging technology, we've been able to predict the chainsaw guy's appearance sans mask. You can check out the results bel . . . oh dear.



DISASTER REPORT

At E3, a game called Disaster: Day of Crisis was announced for Wii, but nothing more than a five-second video clip was shown. Can you provide any more insight on the game?

Torch665
via the Internet

All we know about Disaster: Day of Crisis is that it's being developed by Monolith Soft (the folks responsible for Xenosaga and Baten Kaitos), and that they're describing it as a survival-action game. It's definitely one we'll keep an eye on, though, so stay tuned.

THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY

I was just wondering what your reaction was when a certain other game giant announced that their next-gen console's controller would also include motion-sensing technology.

MetroidLink1030
via the Internet

We don't think it'll be too big a deal, actually. The motion-sensing technology in the PS3 controller isn't nearly as sophisticated as that in the Wii remote (theirs detects tilt only), and judging by what we saw at E3, it doesn't appear that many PS3 games will take advantage of it. That said, Sony obviously felt that Nintendo was onto something, and the decision to include such a feature in the PS3 controller sort of reaffirms Nintendo's approach. But we don't expect the limited functionality on the PS3 controller to fundamentally change the way you play games like the Wii controller does.

MAN UP

For most of my life, I considered myself to be a real manly man. That is, until I started playing games like Drill Dozer and Super Princess Peach. I'll admit it, I can't get enough of the bright, colorful graphics, and it still brings a smile to my face each time I see one of Peach's mood swings. Does that make me a sissy?

Mark
via the Internet

If enjoying Drill Dozer and Super Princess Peach makes you less of a man, then put a dress on us and call us Nancy.

BELMONT GOES HOLLYWOOD

In the June issue, you asked Koji Igarashi for his thoughts regarding the announcement of a Castlevania movie. Excuse me? Where did this come from?

browniecakes
via the Internet

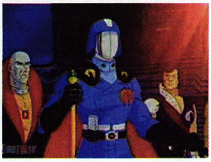
*For those who may not have heard, Konami struck a deal with Dimension Films to create a big-screen adaptation of the popular vampire-hunter series. Paul W. S. Anderson (*Resident Evil, Alien vs. Predator*) is signed on to write and direct the flick, which is slated to hit theaters sometime next year. We're just happy Uwe Boll isn't involved, or we'd probably see Simon Belmont played by Meatloaf.*

WHO'S THE BOSS?

What does the boss of Nintendo Power look like?

David W.
via the Internet

The photograph's a bit outdated, but here's a rare glimpse at the leader of our shadowy organization.



PREPARE FOR LAUNCH

I'm going to buy a Wii as soon as it comes out, but something has been bugging me. Not the system itself, but the games. I've heard that Super Mario Galaxy and Super Smash Bros. Brawl won't be released at launch, and that we may have to wait [an additional] six months for them. I am a patient person, but I don't want a system with no games to play on it for six months. I would like to know which games *will* be released at launch.

darkpower101010
via the Internet

Nintendo hasn't released an official list yet, but the following titles have all been announced for launch: The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, Metroid Prime 3: Corruption, Red Steel, Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors, Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz, and Rayman: Raving Rabbids. And we expect that's just the tip of the iceberg. So as much as we'd love to see Super Mario Galaxy and Super Smash Bros. Brawl at launch, there will be plenty of other top-notch titles to keep us busy.

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

A minor correction, but in Volume 204, on "The Gorea and the Omega" final boss strategy for Metroid Prime Hunters, you said to "nail it [Gorea's weak spot while red] with the Judicator." You meant Imperialist, I believe.

Latios
via the Internet

You are correct, sir. Our bad.

In June's "Framing the Game" article, you said that the painting depicting Link as an old man by Ryan Bubing was titled "The Lost Hoorah." However, under the picture, you labeled it "The Last Hoorah." This isn't the biggest of mistakes, but is it "Last" or "Lost"?

Peter S.
via the Internet

It should be "The Last Hoorah." We apologize for the typo.

I found a mistake in Volume 204. On page 56, you say that the level on the back of a Wiggler [in New Super Mario Bros.] is World 7-2. It's actually World 7-3.

dawillcoolio
via the Internet

You know what I like about you guys? Whenever you get corrected, you take it like a man (or woman). That's why I respect your opinion so much. If you didn't accept that you made a mistake, I wouldn't think you were all that cool.

Rory S.
via the Internet

Thanks, Rory. That means we're triple-cool this month, right?

SMASHING IDEAS

After I saw [the trailer for Super Smash Bros. Brawl], I spent the next day dreaming about what other characters could be in the game. What about a Beast Laguz like Mordecai from Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance? Or what if they gave Link the "alt" form of the wolf from Twilight Princess? And with the introduction of Solid Snake, it seems even more likely that Sonic and Soma Cruz [from Castlevania] could join the roster. I love me some Melee, but Brawl could be the greatest fighting game ever.

Robertorulez
via the Internet

It would be awesome if Skies of Arcadia characters made it into Super Smash Bros. Brawl. Ramirez would have an ice blade to match Roy's fire blade, and there could be a stage based on the battle between the Delphinus and the Hydra, where cannons pose a potential threat to the combatants.

William J.
via the Internet

With Snake included, I hope this means that many third-party developers will be getting some of their all-stars into SSBB, such as Sonic the Hedgehog, Crono from Chrono Trigger, and Geno from Super Mario RPG.

Ryan S.
via the Internet

Here's an idea for a character that would be awesome [in SSBB]: Sarge from Army Men: Sarge's Heroes! You should run that by the development team.

Cody A.
via the Internet

Umm . . . no.

I think that the makers [of SSBB] should definitely include Isaac from Golden Sun. He is an awesome character, and he would definitely fit into the "Nintendo clique." And hopefully by adding Isaac (or Felix), Nintendo can get Golden Sun's fans ready for an upcoming Wii sequel!

Chanandaler
via the Internet

Now that Snake has been allowed in SSBB, the door for third-party characters is wide open. So I was thinking, what are the chances of certain characters being added to SSBB? I know Sonic has a good chance, but I'd love to see Kalas from Baten Kaitos. Or Lloyd from Tales of Symphonia. Or the Gunstar Heroes!

Ivan
via the Internet

I'd like to make a suggestion for another new character in SSBB: Albert Wesker. Seriously, he would be really cool!

Subzero925
via the Internet

Some people are complaining about third-party characters (such as Solid Snake) being in Super Smash Bros. Brawl. Personally, I don't care. What do you guys think?

Nin10dotom
via the Internet

We think those people need to lighten up. As most of the letters we've received on the subject point out, the inclusion of third-party characters in SSBB could be the greatest thing since sliced bread.

Is there any chance that you could do a monthly section on how Super Smash Bros. Brawl is being made, much like you are doing with Twilight Princess?

Supermarioluigi
via the Internet

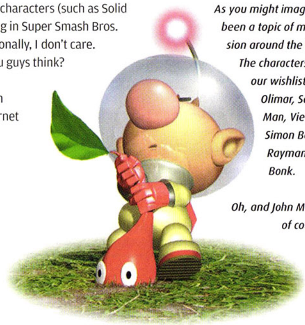
While we don't have any plans to do an Inside Zelda-style feature, we will profile one of SSBB's brawlers each month (starting with Solid Snake in this issue). Also, be sure to check out the Smash Bros. Dojo at smashbros.com for occasional insights from the game's director, Masahiro Sakurai.

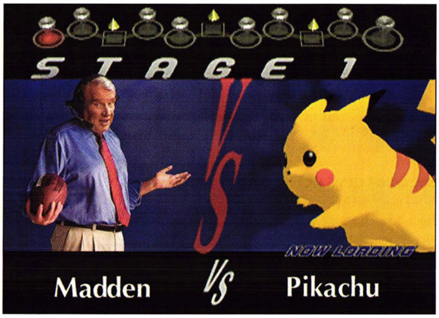
I would like to know which characters you guys at Nintendo Power would like to see incorporated into Super Smash Bros. Brawl.

LegendofGanon
via the Internet

As you might imagine, this has been a topic of much discussion around the NP offices. The characters at the top of our wishlist are Captain Olimar, Sonic, Mega Man, Viewtiful Joe, Simon Belmont, Rayman, Klonoa, and Bonk.

Oh, and John Madden, of course.





"This Thanksgiving we're having turduckachu!"

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Or via carrier pigeon at:

Nintendo Power
PO Box 97033
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PUBLISHER
T. Kimishima
EDITOR IN CHIEF
Yoshio Tsuboike
MANAGING EDITOR
Scott Pelland
ART DIRECTOR
Kim Logan
SUPERVISING EDITOR
Jessica Joffe Stein
SENIOR WRITERS/EDITORS
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George Sinfield
SENIOR WRITER
Steve Thomason
STAFF WRITERS
Chris Hoffman
Andy Myers
Christopher Shepperd
CONTRIBUTING WRITER
David Wharton
EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS
Reggie Fils-Aime
George Harrison
Dan Owsen
Jacqualee Story
Juana Tingdale
COPY EDITOR
Candace English
ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER
Machiko Oehler
SENIOR PRODUCTION SPECIALIST
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PRODUCTION COORDINATORS
Mayumi Colson
Paul Gerlt
DESIGN LEAD
Jim Catechi
SENIOR DESIGNER
Tim Garret
DESIGNERS
Cory Conner
Rebekah Lane
David Waterworth
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT/CONTRIBUTING WRITER
Pete Michaud
DESIGN, GAME STRATEGY & ILLUSTRATION
V-Design Inc.
V-DESIGN INC. ART DIRECTOR
Yoshi Orimo
V-DESIGN INC.
Adam Crowell
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Jill Story
BUSINESS DIRECTOR
Casey Pelkey
MARKETING MANAGER
Jeff Bafus
SALES AND MARKETING ASSISTANT MANAGER
Malinda Miller
For advertising inquiries, contact
np.advertising@noa.nintendo.com

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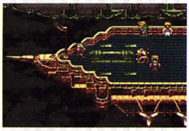
MOST WANTED

Go to nintendo.com to vote for your most-wanted games and let your voice be heard!

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

1 The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2 Super Paper Mario
3 Baten Kaitos Origins
4 LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy
5 Super Monkey Ball Adventure



>GAME BOY ADVANCE

1 Final Fantasy VI
2 Final Fantasy V
3 Yggdra Union
4 Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation
5 Metal Slug

>NINTENDO DS

1 The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
2 Final Fantasy III
3 Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin
4 Children of Mana
5 Yoshi's Island 2

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

C'mon, Sega! Sonic Riders' success is obviously attributable to the inclusion of NiGHTS as a playable character. Now get to work on NiGHTS for Wii!

1 Sonic Riders
2 Ice Age 2: The Meltdown
3 Harvest Moon: Magical Melody
4 Mario Kart: Double Dash!!
5 Naruto: Clash of Ninja
6 Super Mario Sunshine
7 Madagascar
8 Super Smash Bros. Melee
9 Super Mario Strikers
10 LEGO *Star Wars*

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

A number of oldies-but-goodies return to the GBA sales chart this month as a result of their new Players' Choice status.

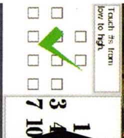
Not an oldie-but-goodie.

1 Ice Age 2: The Meltdown
2 Super Mario Advance
3 Disney's Chicken Little
4 The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
5 Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3
6 Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga
7 Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories
8 Yu-Gi-Oh! Ultimate Masters: World Championship Tour 2006
9 Catz
10 Pokémon Emerald

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

Brain Age debuts at number one. Will it have the staying power it did in Japan?



1 Brain Age

2 Metroid Prime Hunters

3 Animal Crossing: Wild World

4 Tetris DS

5 Mario Kart DS

6 Super Princess Peach

7 Nintendogs: Dachshund

8 Ice Age 2: The Meltdown

9 Pokémon Trozei

10 Nintendogs: Labrador

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

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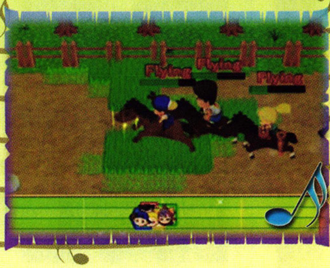
- ♪ Plant crops, raise livestock, dig for gems or just fish!
- ♪ Unlock hidden multiplayer mini games!
- ♪ Beat your farming rival in the fields and at the festivals!

summer 10 Thu
am07:50

winter 15 Sat
am06:50



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HARVEST MOONLIGHTING

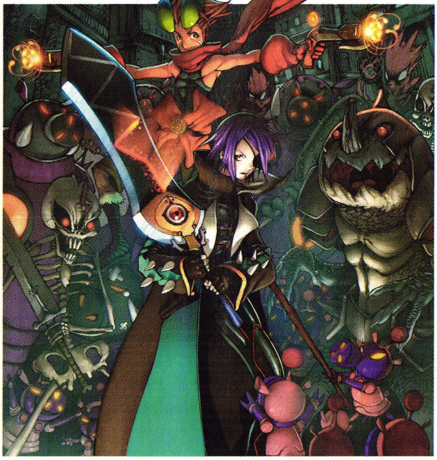
TINGLE BREAKS OUT

CONTACT WITH SUDA

SOLAR SYSTEM

Moonlit Madness

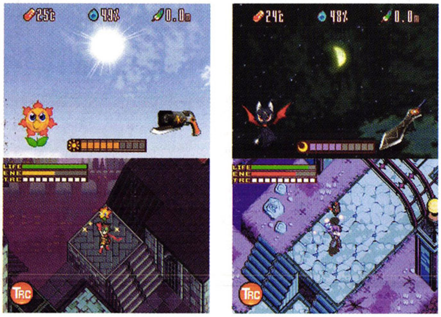
A virtual weather system and outer-space shootouts are among the highlights in Boktai sequel Lunar Knights.



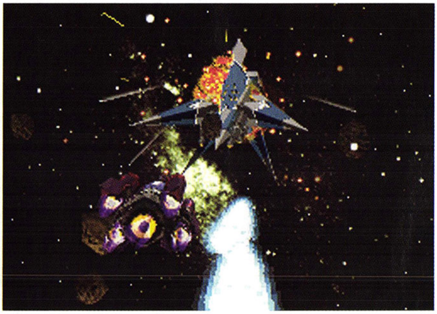
The Sun Is in Your Hand was the subtitle for the original Boktai on GBA, but in Konami's recently announced DS follow-up, Lunar Knights, you'll be able to get your mitts on the sun, the moon, the stars, the weather, and a whole lot more.

While the top-down 2-D visual style, underlying vampiric themes, and action-RPG gameplay of Boktai remain intact, many other aspects have changed—perhaps most importantly the inclusion of a virtual weather system that appears on the DS's top screen and replaces the solar-powered sensor in Boktai. By paying attention to the changing conditions, you can utilize wind gusts to clear gaps, for example, and take advantage of rainfall that fills holes and causes blocks to float. More importantly, the weather system indicates the time of day, helping you decide which of the game's two heroes to switch to—the sword-wielding, lunar-affiliated Lucian (essentially the equivalent of the first game's Sabata), or the gun-toting, sun-powered Aaron (think Django). Elemental Terranial helpers provide extra power; each one gives access to a unique Burst Attack that takes advantage of the DS's features in different ways, such as a frost attack that requires you to blow into the mic.

Another new addition to Lunar Knights is the Casket Rocket—which you'll use to fly defeated bosses' remains into deep space for purification via action-packed, arcade-style, touch-screen-driven 3-D shooter scenes. With its innovative mix of gameplay elements, alongside features like anime cut-scenes (by Studio 4 Degrees) and promised multiplayer modes, Lunar Knights is shaping up to be one of the most exciting DS games on the horizon. Look for it before year's end. —Chris H.



The top screen in Lunar Knights indicates the weather conditions and time of day. When the sun is out, you'll want to play as Aaron with his dual Solar Guns, but when it sets, creature of the night Lucian is your better bet.



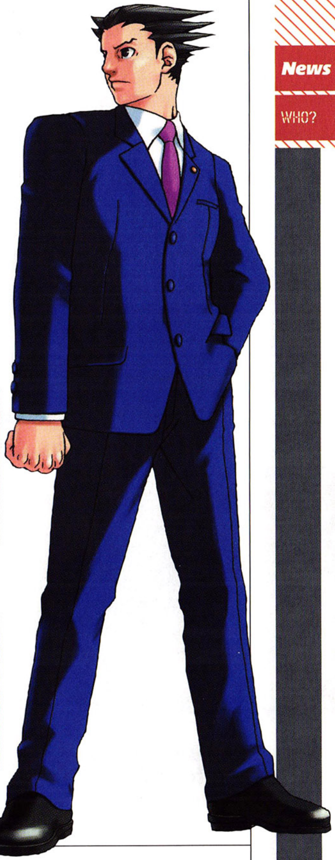
Lunar Knights's sci-fi-meets-Gothic themes are clearly evident in the Casket Rocket shooter sequences. When you're in the rocket, you'll drag the stylus to move, and tap the screen to open fire.

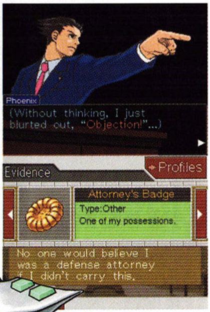
WRIGHT ON!

Phoenix Rising Again

Appeal granted: Capcom's litigious series prepares for a return to the DS courtroom in early 2007.

In his first DS outing, defense attorney extraordinaire Phoenix Wright proved his clients' innocence, revealed the guilty parties, and brought down a corrupt bureaucracy. Now he's getting set to do it again in the sequel, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice For All. An enhanced version of Phoenix's second GBA game (which was released only in Japan), Justice For All features the same brand of anime-inspired, graphic-and-text-based drama as the original. While the game remains divided between courtroom scenes and crime-scene investigation segments, Phoenix will now have to break witnesses' Psyche-Locks to make them reveal the truth on the stand. The stakes are higher as well; Phoenix will be penalized for following incorrect lines of questioning. Crazy characters new and old—including psychic assistant Maya Fey and new prosecutor Franziska von Karma (daughter of Phoenix's former foe)—will be on hand when court resumes session in Q1 2007. —Chris H.

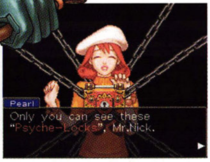




Phoenix
(Without thinking, I just blurted out, "Objection!"...)

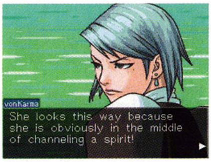
Evidence
Profiles
Attorney's Badge
Type:Other
One of my possessions.

No one would believe I was a defense attorney if I didn't carry this.



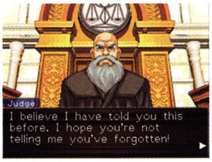
Pearl
Only you can see these "Psyche-Locks", Mr.Nick.

Phoenix must ask the right questions and present the right evidence to overcome witnesses' defenses.



vonKarma
She looks this way because she is obviously in the middle of channeling a spirit!

Meet prosecutor Franziska von Karma. Phoenix sullied her family name, and now she wants revenge.



Judge
I believe I have told you this before. I hope you're not telling me you've forgotten!

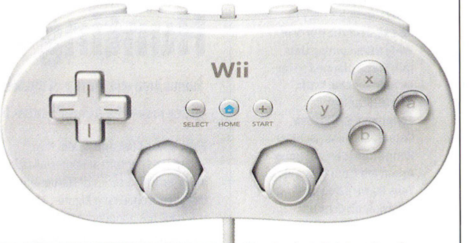
Anime-style visuals mesh with snappy dialogue to create the Phoenix Wright series' unique tone.

CLASSIC CONFRONTATIONS

Virtual Made Reality

What do a plumber, a hedgehog, and a head-banging caveman have in common? They were all playable on Wii's Virtual Console at E3 2006.

Nearly a year after Nintendo president Satoru Iwata announced Wii's ability to play classic games, the Virtual Console finally appeared at E3 2006. Five games, each originating from a different system, were playable at the show: Super Mario Bros. (NES), Super Mario World (SNES), Super Mario 64 (N64), Sonic the Hedgehog (Sega Genesis), and Bonk's Adventure (TurboGrafx-16). All five games were just as fun as their original releases, and a responsive classic-style Wii controller—which resembled an SNES pad, but with dual analog sticks—completed the retro feel perfectly. While Hudson Soft (maker of Bonk's Adventure) committed to releasing a wide array of Virtual Console games, other details remain scarce. Stay tuned; Nintendo will reveal more Virtual Console news in the coming months. —Chris H.



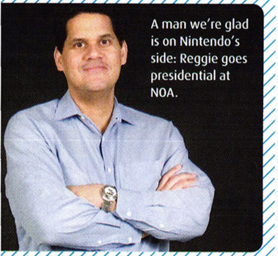
The classic-style (above) and Zapper-style (left; work in progress) controllers are perfectly suited to Virtual Console games. Both may be utilized by brand-new Wii titles, not just retro games.

NINTENDO MOVES

Reggie on His Biggest Quest Yet

Nintendo's resident warrior picks up +10 Sword of NOA Might.

Nintendo of America president Tatsumi Kimishima has moved up to a sweeter office as chief excecutive officer and board chairman, and asked Reggie Fils-Aime to take on the position of NOA's new prez and chief operating officer. Considering a third exec promotion—Mike Fukuda as exec VP of business development—Nintendo seems mobilized to launch into video game overdrive.



A man we're glad is on Nintendo's side: Reggie goes presidential at NOA.

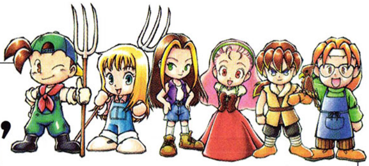
Big Season for DS Wi-Fi

Players on Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection will soon be very busy.

Amidst the blizzard of E3 revelations, it's easy to lose sight of the flurry of Wi-Fi titles coming this fall. Those planned so far include Tenchu: Dark Secret, Star Fox Command, Clubhouse Games, Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2, and Custom Robo Arena (all from Nintendo); Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam (Activision); Contact (Atlus); Panzer Tactics DS (CDV); Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin, Marvel Trading Card Game, GoPets, and Winning Eleven Pro Evolution Soccer 2007 (Konami).

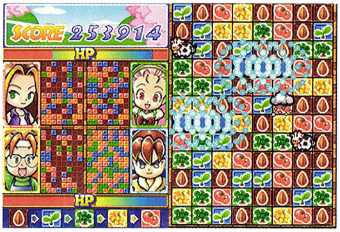
100% ORGANIC

New Moon Risin'



Put away the pitchforks and shovels—Harvest Moon has some new, germ-free activities for you to enjoy.

It looks like the good, hard-working folk of Harvest Moon are taking a little break from their daily duties—Natsume has announced Puzzle de Harvest Moon, a puzzle game featuring the characters from the venerable farming series. How you'll actually play the game is still pretty much unknown, but the game's makers say that, in keeping with the farming mindset, your goal is to grow and harvest crops. The "Puzzle de" part of the title suggests a Tetris Attack-style system—that game's original title was Panel de Pon in Japan. We do know that up to four players can play simultaneously, and that you hold the DS sideways à la Brain Age to play. You'll also unlock bonus minigames as you play through the game's story mode. —Chris S.



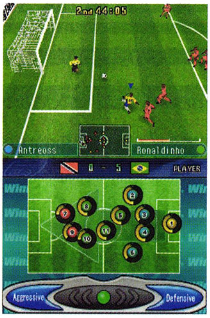
You can keep track of your opponents' progress on the upper screen (or in this case, side screen) while you manipulate the game board on the touch screen.

SHOT MADE ROUND THE WORLD

DS Goes to Eleven

The DS debut of Konami's Winning Eleven soccer series takes the game global with Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection-enabled matches.

For 11 years, Winning Eleven has been a soccer force to be reckoned with, thanks to detailed graphics, realistic AI behavior, and tight play control. For its 2007 edition, the series that was originally called Goal Storm hits the DS and goes worldwide with matches between national teams made playable via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. The game uses the handheld's dual screens to show both a closeup of the action and a view of the entire field, and touch-screen functionality to single out individual players, potentially making the athletes that you touch with your stylus more aggressive. While console versions of Winning Eleven Pro Evolution Soccer 2007 are adding complexity, Konami has opted to simplify the DS version for series newcomers. With World Cup fever spreading, the game is sure to bring many new players to video game soccer. —David W./George S.



Three views of the pitch and the players give you all the info you need to plan your next move.

SCENES FROM A BRAWL

Hunting Trophies

Samus Aran and the rest of the Metroid Prime Hunters are set to be frozen in time for a line of statues from First 4 Figures.

First it was Link and Zelda. Now Samus gets her turn at immortalization in plastic with a series of statues and dioramas from First 4 Figures. The company has announced a three-year deal with Nintendo to develop high-end action figures depicting characters from the Metroid universe, including Samus in her Varia Suit, Light and Dark Samus, and all of the combatants from Metroid Prime Hunters. Individual statues, available in the late summer, will measure nine inches to a foot, and will be available at prices ranging from $85 to $120. Dioramas depicting battles like the ones that have made Metroid Prime Hunters a Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection hit are expected to be available in the $200 range. For more details, visit www.first4figures.com. —George S.

From molten lava to plastic—Spire is part of the Metroid Prime Hunters statue line.

The Big News. In Wii.

E3 was Wii3 to us; there are **so many Wii games in the works** that we had a tough time choosing only 25 to put in our most-wanted feature on page 52. Nintendo isn't resting on its laurels; it soon followed up with a statement of its **Wii launch plans**: The company will ship **six million systems** around the world between its fall launch and the end of March 2007, plus expects that 17 million Wii games will sell in that period. . . . Oh, we almost forgot the detail you've waited for: the Wii **will not exceed $250** in the U.S.! Okay, it's the final price that you want, but now you know that you won't have to work two jobs and sell your blood to afford *Nintendo's* console. . . . On to game announcements! The action-RPG **Marvel: Ultimate Alliance** will bring foe Galactus into Wii space, along with 20-plus playable heroes like Spidey, Wolvie, and Blade. . . . Ubisoft will soon make it **Open Season** on Wii with a game based on the bear-and-buck flick. The movie's due in the fall; no word on when the game will hit. . . . Buena Vista has a tie-in with **Disney's Meet the Robinsons**, based on the animated sci-fi film that opens in '07. . . . Many more games surfaced at E3, though none that follow have been pinned down for North America: Few E3 demos had us chomping at the bit more than Namco Bandai's **Final Furlong**, which lets players urge a racehorse around a track by using the Wii's remote and nunchuk like reins and a whip. . . . The same publisher has a host of games in the works for Wii, including **Mobile Suit Gundam, SD Gundam G Breaker, Digimon, One Piece Unlimited Adventure, and Tamagotchi,** plus a new action game, a new RPG, and the mysterious "Title TBD". . . . Many more publishers and developers have announced secret TBD titles that are well under way, so expect **future waves of Wii games** from this group of companies: Banpresto, D3PA, Eidos, Epoch, FromSoftware, The Game Factory, Genki, Jaleco, Koei, Mastiff, Milestone, MTO, Tomy, Vivendi Games, and Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment. . . . Titleless Taito's Wii games are not, though aside from a game in its **Cooking Mama** series, we're thoroughly baffled by titles like **Turn It Around!!** and **Let's Go by Train!** (we'll obey gladly on Wii, of course). . . . Sports fits the motion-controlled console hand in glove, as already seen in Nintendo's Wii Sports and EA's Madden, and more are coming, including a **boxing-action game** from AQ Interactive, a **soccer game** from Konami, and **Super Swing Golf PANGYA** from Tecmo. . . . Majesco may not have gotten the Wii-name memo yet; it's got **Bust-a-Move Revolution** ready to bring puzzle icons Bub and Bob to Wii in early '07. . . . Japanese publisher Spike will be the first to bring our flashlight-clutching nightmares to life in the survival-horror game **Necro-Nesia**; Spike's also got a Wii game titled **Jawa** in the works. —Steven G.

DON'T-MISS DATES

Busy Fall for Nintendo

The summertime drought of games will soon be over.

Gamers hate July, since releases dry up. Relief is on the way, however, now that Nintendo's revealed the plans for many DS, GCN, and GBA titles on the way—and stay tuned for Wii release dates!

8-21

- **Tenchu: Dark Secret (DS)**

8-28

- **Star Fox Command (DS)**

9-18

- **Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team (DS)**
- **Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team (GBA)**

9-25

- **Baten Kaitos Origins (GCN)**
- **Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis (DS)**

10-9

- **Super Paper Mario (GCN)**
- **Clubhouse Games (DS)**

10-30

- **Children of Mana (DS)**

More This Fall, Dates TBD

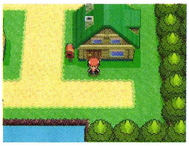
- **The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess (Wii, GCN)**
- **Custom Robo Arena (DS)**
- **Elite Beat Agents (DS)**
- **DK Bongo Blast (GCN)**
- **The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass (DS)**
- **Magical Vacation (DS)**
- **Yoshi's Island 2 (DS)**
- **Hotel Dusk: Room 215 (DS)**

NEWS FROM JAPAN!

Sparkly RPGs Surface

Diamonds, pearls, and Rupees: What's with all the gem-encrusted titles? Nintendo simply means to say that the RPGs in store for Japanese gamers will be treasures.

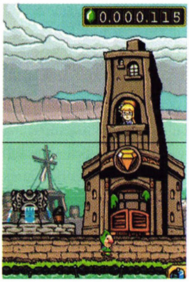
Pokémon Diamond & Pokémon Pearl



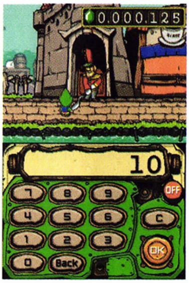
This fall, Japanese gamers will walk Shin-ou, the realm of Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl. Nintendo suggests that the first name means "ultimate hardness" and the second represents the "ultimate circular shape," so the two versions are meant to comprise the ultimate Pokémon RPG. As for how they'll deliver the goods (new Pokémon, fresh villainy, and DS-oriented gameplay), the world must wait a little longer. For now, witness the first steps taken in Shin-ou. Worry not: The games will allow players to bring in Kanto and Hoenn Pokémon caught in the GBA RPGs. —Steven G.

Tingle's Rose-Colored Rupee Land

Say what? The title of Tingle's RPG loses a little in translation, but it hits the game's concept square on the head. Set long before Zelda's infamous side character sold his first map to Link for Rupees, the game drops in on Tingle just before he first dons his fake-fairy suit. He starts the RPG as an average-Joe 35-year-old bachelor living in a humble house. But soon the Master of Rupees appears in a dream and reveals that Tingle can enter the paradise of Rupee Land if he can prove himself worthy by amassing a fortune. It's a weird RPG setup, but one that's just right for an oddity like Tingle. No Japanese release date has yet been set for the offbeat game. —Steven G.



Screens for the Tingle RPG show a highly stylized universe that towers on both DS screens, plus a Rupee-tracking counter that shows off Tingle's fortune.



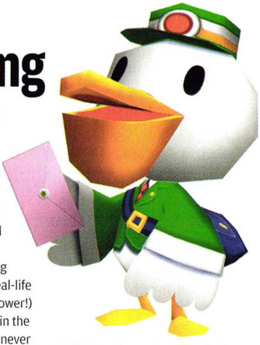
Gameplay revolves around collecting Rupees, plus buying and selling stuff. And though details are scarce, we're told that game will feature crazy battles too.

FUTURE MUSINGS

Wii Ideas for Crossing

Officially, Nintendo hasn't said that Animal Crossing is coming to Wii. But the level of AC chatter at E3 has us hoping for more.

When Nintendo president Satoru Iwata revealed WiiConnect24 during the pre-E3 briefing, he used Animal Crossing as an example of how the Wii's 24/7 Wi-Fi connection could keep games fresh, allowing visitors to enter your town and leave gifts even when you're not playing. It was just a hypothetical, but it made a strong statement about the future of AC. Series producer Katsuya Eguchi explored more ideas at E3, though also stopped short of saying the game was a sure thing. He noted that motion control would be natural for handling tools like the shovel and net, and also said that Nintendo is thinking about letting people send e-mail from their real-life accounts into AC towns. (Mindblower!) No doubt that whatever may be in the works, it'll stoke AC fandom like never before. —Steven G.



Will Pete, the postman in the last two AC games, have to work overtime on Wii?

Suda Secrets

The mad genuis behind Killer 7 has big things in store for the DS and Wii.

At E3, we sat down with Goichi Suda (better known as Suda51), the president of Grasshopper Manufacture, to talk about his company's upcoming DS game Contact and his thoughts on Wii.

Nintendo Power: What would you like us to take away knowing about Contact?

Goichi Suda: We want you to see that Contact is a new kind of game that uses two screens simultaneously to show you different sides of the game. We want you to see the gap between what's going on in the background and what's going on in the forefront; to give you a more interactive connection to the story. It's everyday life, but it's taking it to a new level; it's more extreme. You run into this alternate world. Our aim is to make a new type of RPG.

NP: Could you explain a little bit what the title of the game means?

GS: You, the player, are contacting the characters inside this virtual world. You actually have a role in the game, and you're interacting with Terry and the professor. So that's the inspiration for the name Contact. Also, because of the Wi-Fi connection features, we want you to contact other people around the world using this game. Is this type of concept really strange to you as a US gamer?

NP: Actually, no. Coming from Goichi Suda, after seeing Killer 7, we were expecting something really crazy and out there. And this seems surprisingly normal. [Laughs]

GS: You might think it's not as crazy because it's mostly [director] Akira Ueda's work. After working on established properties like Shining Soul II, we wanted to let him do an original title. You're probably referring to my craziness in Killer 7 because that was my work. But this time, I didn't pull Mr. Ueda too much to do something crazy. It's more Mr. Ueda's taste. If I had made it, it would have been called Killer Contact. [Laughs] People who make crazy games are normal in real life. But people who make "normal" games like Contact are crazy in real life. [Laughs] So Mr. Ueda is a very crazy person. [Laughs]

NP: I was wondering if we could get your thoughts on Wii and whether Grasshopper has any plans for the console.

GS: The market right now is very stagnant because of a lack of creativity. But with the DS and its new style of control, we're expecting a lot more creative titles that will spark the industry. And Wii has that same potential and we're very excited about that. Do you want me to tell you a secret?

NP: Of course!

GS: We're actually working on a Wii title in collaboration with Spike. It was supposed to be here at the show, but things didn't work out. And no, it's not Necro-Nesia! [Laughs] Hopefully we'll be able to talk more about it soon. It will be a very cool title. [Laughs] What is your response to Wii? What kind of things do you expect?

NP: I was skeptical at first. But after playing the games, I think the ones that use it in ways that make sense are amazing. If developers figure out a way to implement the unique control to actually improve the gameplay instead of just doing something for the sake of being different, we'll see some really great stuff.

GS: I'm not a rich guy, so I want a console that I can actually own. [Laughs] This E3 is a very hard one for developers because we're wondering which platform we should go for. If you go with Wii, you can't create the same game for PS3. Wii is so different. There's no more multiplatform like it used to be where you could create a game for all three platforms at once. Someone like EA might be able to do it because they have money. But Japanese developers have no money. [Laughs] Here's surprise number two: We'll be making a Contact 2 for . . . um, a Nintendo platform to be announced. [Laughs] In January, Mr. Ueda set up his own independent company called Audio. He will continue to work on Contact 2 under that brand. I would like the American audience to keep an eye on this new studio, as well as Grasshopper.

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GAME WATCH FORECAST

Though we filled up Forecast with many new games last month, E3 brought tons more surprises. So now behold the next year of your gaming lives, and expect Wii to hit Forecast soon!

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release
Game Title Publisher ●●●
Game Title Publisher ●●● —New games added to the list

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

The Ant Bully	Midway	●●○
Avatar: The Last Airbender	THQ	●●○
Backyard Baseball 2007	Atari	●●○
Backyard Basketball 2007	Atari	●○○
Backyard Football 2007	Atari	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Baten Kaitos Origins	Nintendo	●●○
Bionicle Heroes	**Eidos**	**●○○**
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	THQ	●●○
Cars	THQ	●●●
DK Bongo Blast	Nintendo	●●○
Flushed Away	**D3PA**	**●●○**
Foodfight!	**Global Star**	**●●○**
The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy	Midway	●●○
Happy Feet	Midway	●○○
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	Vivendi	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
Madden NFL 07	EA	●●○
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
Monster House	THQ	●●○
The Movies	TBD	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	Tomy/D3PA	●●○
Nicktoons*	THQ	●●○
Pac-Man World Rally	Namco	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●●○
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	Sega	●●○
Super Paper Mario	Nintendo	●●○
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	Ubisoft	●●○
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●●○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●●○
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Fury	Namco Bandai	●○○

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	THQ	●●○
The Ant Bully	Midway	●●○
Avatar: The Last Airbender	THQ	●●○
Babar to the rescue	**game factory**	**●●●**
Backyard Basketball 2007	Atari	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Battle B-Daman	Atlus	●●○
Battle B-Daman 2	Atlus	●○○
Bionicle Heroes	**Eidos**	**●○○**
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	THQ	●●○
Camp Lazlo: Leaky Lake Games	Crave	●●○
Capcom Classics Mini Mix	**Capcom**	**●●○**
Cars	THQ	●●●
The Cheetah Girls	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Danny Phantom: Urban Jungle	THQ	●●○
Disney Princess: Royal Adventure	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Dora's World Adventure	**Global Star**	**●●○**
Eragon	Vivendi	●●○
Family Feud	**Global Star**	**●●○**
Final Fantasy V Advance	Nintendo	●○○
Final Fantasy VI Advance	Nintendo	●○○
Flushed Away	D3PA	●●○
Foodfight!	**Global Star**	**●●○**
Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends	Crave	●●○
Games Explosion!	**THQ**	**●●○**
The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy	Midway	●○○
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●○○
Happy Feet	Midway	●○○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	American Game Factory	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	Vivendi	●○○
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
Little Einsteins	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Undersea Adventure	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Madden NFL 07	EA	●○○
Meet the Robinsons	**Buena Vista**	**●○○**
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●○
Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Falzar & Cybeast Gregar Versions	Capcom	●●●
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Monster House	THQ	●●○
My Little Pony: Crystal Princess—The Runaway Rainbow	THQ	●○○
Naruto: Ninja Council 2	Tomy/D3PA	●●○
Nicktoons*	THQ	●○○
Phil of the Future	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●●●
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team	Nintendo	●●○
The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
The Santa Clause 3	**Buena Vista**	**●○○**
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●●○
The Suite Life of Zack & Cody	**Buena Vista**	**●○○**
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story	Atlus	●●○
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	Atlus	●○○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation	Atlus	●●○
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	Atlus	●○○
Superman Returns: The Videogame	EA	●○○
Tom and Jerry Tales	**Eidos**	**●○○**
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●●○
Tonka on the Job	THQ	●○○
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Activision	●○○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
Unfabulous	THQ	●○○
VeggieTales: LarryBoy and the Bad Apple	Crave	●●○
Winx Club: The Quest for the Codex	Konami	●●○
W.I.T.C.H.	**Buena Vista**	**●○○**
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○
Yggdra Union	Atlus	●●○

NINTENDO DS

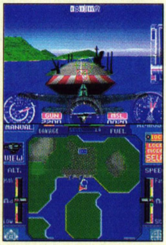
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	THQ	●●○
American Dragon: Jake Long, Attack of the Dark Dragon	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Avatar: The Last Airbender	THQ	●○○
Big Brain Academy	Nintendo	●●●
Bionicle Heroes	**Eidos**	**●○○**
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1*	Aruze	●●○
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	THQ	●●○
Break'em All	D3PA	●●●
Cars	THQ	●●●
Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin	Konami	●●○
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol	Nintendo	●●○
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	**Buena Vista**	**●○○**
Children of Mana	Nintendo	●●○
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
Clubhouse Games	Nintendo	●●○
Contact	Atlus	●●○
Cooking Mama	Majesco	●○○
Crash Boom Bang!	Vivendi	●●○
Custom Robo Arena	Nintendo	●●○
Danny Phantom: Urban Jungle	THQ	●●○
Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom	Konami	●●○
Deep Labyrinth	Atlus	●●○
DK King of Swing DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime	Square Enix	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters	Square Enix	●○○
DS Air*	Nintendo	●●○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●●○
Elite Beat Agents	Nintendo	●●○
Eragon	Vivendi	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*	Square Enix	●○○
Flushed Away	D3PA	●●○
Freedom Wings	**Natsume**	**●●○**
Fushigi No Dungeon*	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
GoPets	**Konami**	**●●○**
Hannah Montana	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Happy Feet	Midway	●○○
Harvest Moon DS	Natsume	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi: The Genie & the Amp	D3PA	●●●
Historical Simulation Game*	Koei	●○○
Hotel Dusk: Room 215	Nintendo	●●○
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●●○
Jam with the Band*	Nintendo	●●○
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Kim Possible: Global Gemini	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Kirby: Squeak Squad	Nintendo	●●○
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	Vivendi	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Undersea Adventure	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Lunar Knights	Konami	●●○
Madden NFL 07	EA	●○○
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	Namco	●●○
Magical Vacation*	Nintendo	●●○
Mah-Jong*	Koei	●○○
Mario Hoops 3-on-3	Nintendo	●●○
Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis	Nintendo	●●○
Marvel Trading Card Game	Konami	●●○
MechAssault: Phantom War	Majesco	●●○
Meet the Robinsons	**Buena Vista**	**●○○**
Mega Man ZX	Capcom	●●○
Meteos: Disney Edition	Buena Vista	●○○
Micro Machines v4	Codemasters	●●○
Miss Spider's: Harvest Time Hop and Fly	**American Game Factory**	**●●●**
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster Bomber	Majesco	●○○
Monster House	THQ	●●○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
My Frogger Toy Trials	**Konami**	**●●○**
Nicktoons*	THQ	●●○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Panzer Tactics DS*	CDV Software	●●○
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All	**Capcom**	**●●○**
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●●●
Point Blank DS	Namco	●●●
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team	Nintendo	●●○
Pokémon Ranger	Nintendo	●●○
Puzzle de Harvest Moon	**Natsume**	**●●○**
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Scooby-Doo!*	**THQ**	**●●○**
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Shin Megami Tensei DS*	Atlus	●○○
SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS	SNK	●●○
Spectrobes	Buena Vista	●●○
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●○○
Star Fox Command	Nintendo	●●○
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	Bethesda	●●○
Steel Horizon	Konami	●●○
Sudoku Gridmaster	Nintendo	●●○
Sudoku Mania Ufo	**Nintendo**	**●●●**
The Suite Life of Zack & Cody	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Superman Returns: The Videogame	EA	●●○
Tenchu: Dark Secret	Nintendo	●●○
That's So Raven: Psychic on the Scene	**Buena Vista**	**●●○**
Tom and Jerry Tales	**Eidos**	**●○○**
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●●○
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Activision	●●○
Top Gear: Downforce	Kemco	●○○
Touch Detective	Atlus	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Vandal Hearts*	Konami	●○○
Winning Eleven: Pro Evolution Soccer 2007	Konami	●●○
Winx Club: The Quest for the Codex	Konami	●●○
Xiaolin Showdown	Konami	●●○
Yggdrasil Labyrinth*	**Atlus**	**●○○**
Yoshi's Island 2*	Nintendo	●●○

* tentative title

DS DETAILS

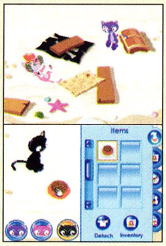
WINGING IT

Natsume's Freedom Wings, due this summer, has you fighting pirates over the South Seas. You'll be able to use the DS touch screen to plan a path for your flying machine and lock onto opponents during four-player dogfights.



FOUR-LEGGED TOUR

Konami's GoPets is coming to DS and Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection for massive dog-and-cat-sharing sessions. The game will let you give your virtual furry friend its own personality, appearance, and hobbies, and share those traits with other GoPets players around the world.



EPIC CENTER

The development team that brought us Trauma Center has gone from the emergency room to the dungeon for a DS RPG tentatively titled Yggdrasil Labyrinth, to be published by Atlus. The team has considered a map-creation mode for the first-person-perspective game, but features are still in the planning stages.

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(s06)

SUPER SMASH BROS. Brawl

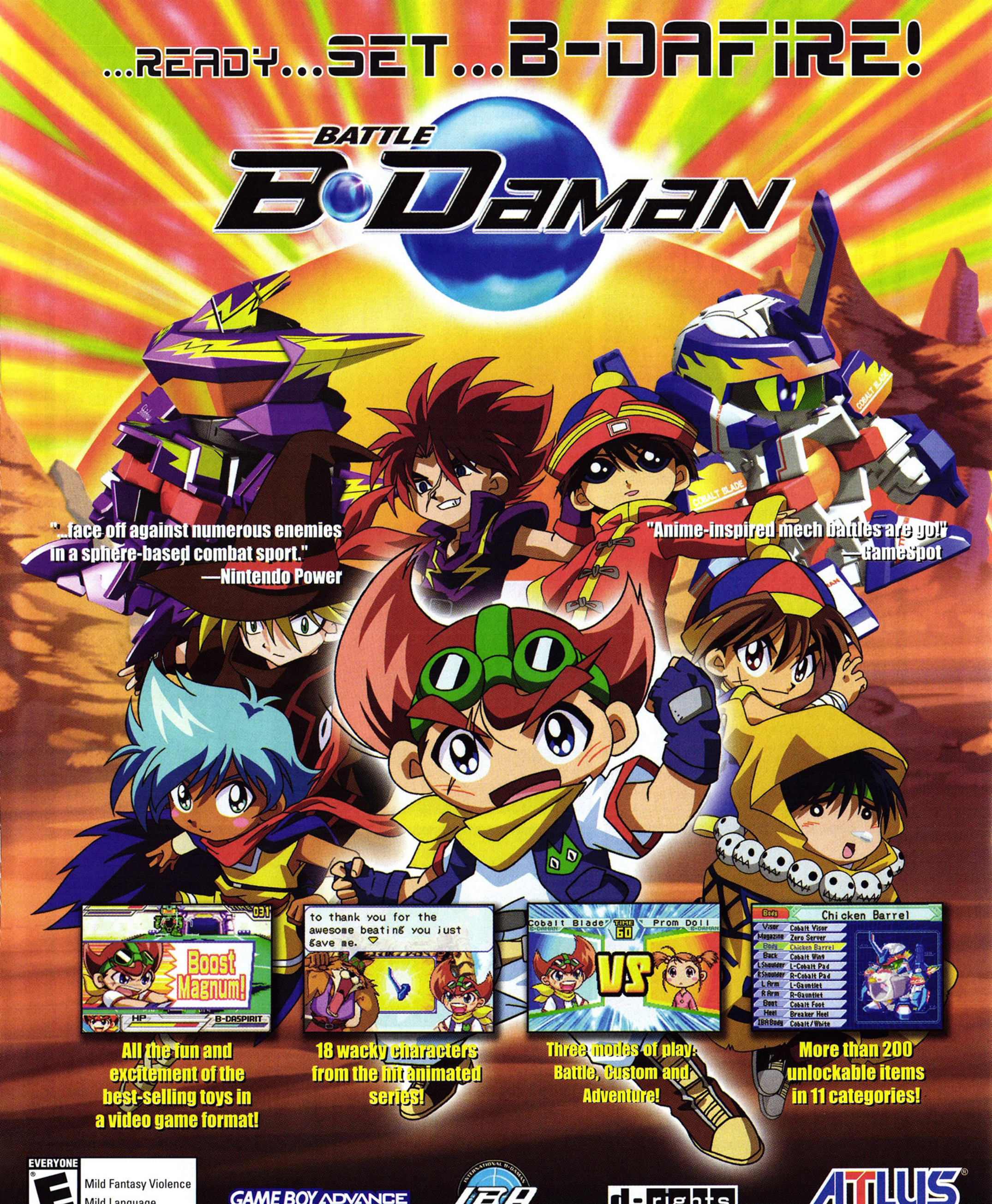
SMASH FILES #01

SOLID SNAKE

FIRST GAME APPEARANCE:
Metal Gear - NES (1988), MSX (1987)

KNOWN FOR:
Destroying nuclear-equipped bipedal tanks, asking short questions

BIOGRAPHY:
The enigmatic Solid Snake has earned his reputation as one of the world's greatest soldiers by bringing down terrorist cells nearly single-handedly and averting nuclear disaster on multiple occasions. Snake is a master of martial arts and a qualified expert at using most firearms and explosive devices, speaks six languages, and boasts an IQ of 180. Believe it or not, Super Smash Bros. Brawl for Wii isn't Snake's first fighting-game foray; he also appeared in the Japanese-only release Dream Mix TV World Fighters on GCN.


...READY...SET...B-DAFIRE!
BATTLE
B-DAMAN
"...face off against numerous enemies in a sphere-based combat sport."
—Nintendo Power
"Anime-inspired mech battles are go!"
—GameSpot
031
Boost Magnum!
HP
B-DASPIRIT
Cobalt Blade
TIME 60
Prom Doll
B-DAMAN
VS

to thank you for the awesome beating you just gave me.

Body	Chicken Barrel
Visor	Cobalt Visor
Magazine	Zero Server
Body	Chicken Barrel
Back	Cobalt Wing
L Shoulder	L-Cobalt Pad
R Shoulder	R-Cobalt Pad
L Arm	L-Gauntlet
R Arm	R-Gauntlet
Boot	Cobalt Foot
Heel	Breaker Heel
IBA Body	Cobalt/White

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EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Fantasy Violence
Mild Language

GAME BOY ADVANCE

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Here come the Wii games—and plenty of other potential hits.

Avatar: The Last Airbender Pg. 31
Battle B-Daman Pg. 27
Capcom Classics Mini Mix Pg. 27
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol Pg. 32
Deep Labyrinth Pg. 31
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaiichi 2 Pg. 29
Elite Beat Agents Pg. 25
Eragon Pg. 30
Kirby: Squeak Squad Pg. 25
Magical Vacation Pg. 30
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon Pg. 26
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Creature from the Krusty Krab Pg. 28
Steel Horizon Pg. 32
Tenchu: Dark Secret Pg. 24
Yoshi's Island 2 Pg. 28

Dark Little Secret

>TENCHU: DARK SECRET

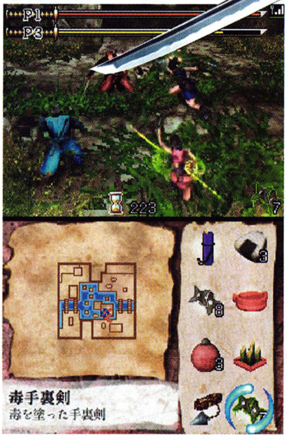
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: FROMSOFTWARE
RELEASE: AUGUST 21, 2006

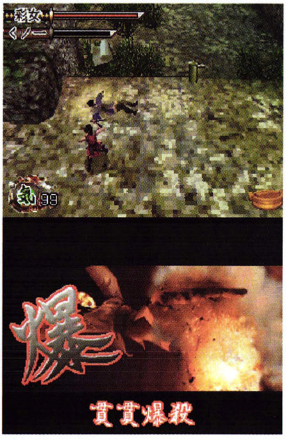
These days, stealth gaming isn't exactly an original idea; but when Tenchu: Stealth Assassins debuted on Sony PlayStation in 1998, it was. The Tenchu franchise has seen some stellar releases over the years, and though popular franchises such as Metal Gear Solid and Splinter Cell have since snuck onto the stealth scene, Tenchu still has much to offer with its unique storyline and engrossing gameplay. Now the venerable series is coming to DS for the first time with Tenchu: Dark Secret, a game that aims to live up to its predecessors and offer elements entirely new to the stealth genre.

Dark Secret brings back the original stealth assassins, Ayame and Rikimaru, for an all-new mission-based adventure set just after the events of Tenchu 2: Birth of the Stealth Assassins. The duo is charged with protecting an injured princess named Shizu, who is being safeguarded in a remote village after suffering an attack from a mysterious clan of ninjas. The twist is that Shizu is married to an evil warlord (and enemy of the stealth assassins), Kagemasa Hakkaku. To fulfill their duty to the princess, Ayame and Rikimaru must disrupt the ninjas by sneaking through more than 40 missions and picking off enemies one by one. Dark Secret gives you a top-down view as you navigate through each level with either hero, using a persistent map (displayed on the lower screen) to note enemy locations.

The trick to success in Dark Secret is to outsmart your enemy by using the game's many items. Lay a deadly trap for a foe to stumble upon, distract an adversary with food, only to perform a stealth kill with your sword while he's munching—these are just a couple of examples. To make things more interesting, the game allows you to craft your own items and weapons, then buy, sell, or trade them with friends or strangers over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. You can use your custom creations outside the game's single-player campaign to engage fellow stealth assassins in Dark Secret's wireless multiplayer battles. There's still much to be discovered within Tenchu's DS premiere, but rest assured—the game is full of surprises, and it's looking like another solid entry in a proven franchise. —ANDY M.

Being a ninja assassin is probably the coolest job ever.





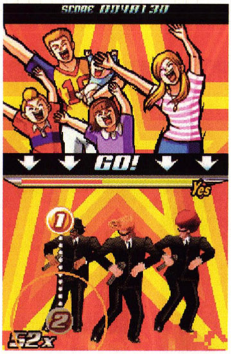
Government Groove

>ELITE BEAT AGENTS

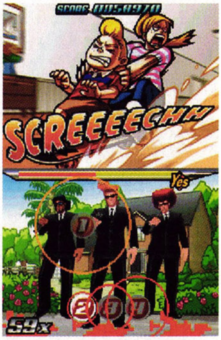
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: INIS • RELEASE: Q4 2006

When life gets out of sync, men in black Derek, Morris, and J come calling in Nintendo's Elite Beat Agents. The fast-moving and perpetually surprising rhythm game tells a story of small troubles and their groove solutions. As events unfold on the top screen in comic-book panels, the impeccably dressed trio moves to a popular tune ("Walkie Talkie Man" and "Highway Star" were the selections in the game's E3 demo) and throws out tap-and-drag challenges. The tighter your timing while meeting those challenges, the faster you'll fill the Groove-o-Meter and work toward a positive outcome. During instrumental breaks, the agents pass judgment on your performance. If you've done well, the story will hit a high note. If not, it will progress, but it may veer in an odd direction.

As the music rocks your DS, hit markers, phrase markers, and spin markers pop up in time with the beat. While you touch the markers in sequence, you will either get into a groove or fall apart completely. It's a rare game in which success and failure are equally satisfying. —GEORGE S.



SCORE 0040825
VREEEEM!
5



SCORE 0036415
Thank you, doggy!
Ruff!

SCORE 0048130
SHOOOP!

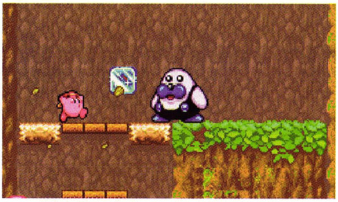
Rodents Rule

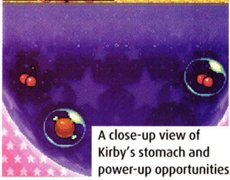
>KIRBY: SQUEAK SQUAD

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: HAL LABORATORY • RELEASE: TBD

A roving band of whiskered rascals is trolling for treasure in Kirby's upcoming DS epic, and the resilient hero has something to say about it. While chasing after the mousy villains of the Squeak Squad, Kirby consumes creatures to clear them away and to copy their abilities (as usual). He also collects items that refill his energy, and new bubble-bound power-ups that drop into his belly (the DS touch screen) and stay there until you activate them. The power-ups are abilities (like those of the creatures that the little guy gulps) and energizing food items. By double-tapping an item, you can activate it. You can also combine two abilities by dragging one into the other with your stylus to make an all-new ability. It pays to save powers for special circumstances—as some allow you to transform your surroundings: Burn or cut brush to expose items or exits, or claw through dirt and tunnel your way to treasure.

The game advances through lush green areas, caves, castle interiors, and many other beautifully rendered locations, and Kirby takes on a huge collection of creatures, including the aforementioned band of mice. We'll have more on Kirby's latest and on his new nemeses in an upcoming issue.
—GEORGE S.





A close-up view of Kirby's stomach and power-up opportunities.

Dungeons & Dragonite

>POKéMON MYSTERY DUNGEON

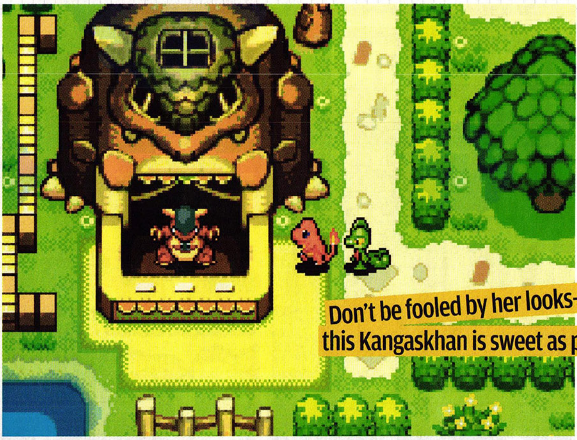
PLATFORM: DS, GBA • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: CHUNSOFT • RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2006

In many ways, Mystery Dungeon is an entirely new Pokémon experience, and for hard-core Pokémaniacs, it might be a little disorienting at first. You wake up one morning in a strange world inhabited entirely by Pokémon, and find that you yourself have been transformed into a Pokémon. Actually, you're a human trapped inside a Pokémon's body (which Pokémon you'll inhabit is determined by your answers to a series of profile questions at the beginning of the game). As a Pokémon, you can understand the language of all Pokémon, and they can understand you.

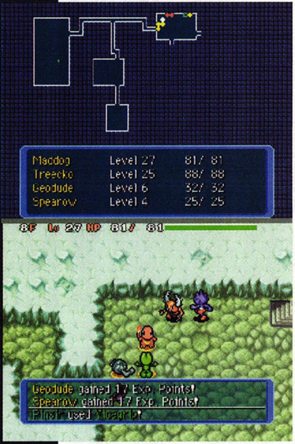
This Pokémon world is going through a bit of turmoil—the Pokémon have been tormented by natural disasters such as earthquakes and violent storms. You're soon thrust into the role of a rescue-team leader, and the requests for aid start pouring in. With a band of Pokémon you've recruited, you must explore perilous areas and perform a variety of objectives, all while trying to learn how you became a Pokémon in the first place.

The Pokémon-filled dungeons introduce a style of gameplay new to the series. You guide your party around the area via a top-down view, engaging enemies, finding items, and progressing deeper and deeper by discovering staircases. Exploration and combat are all turn-based—when you make a move, all of your party members make a move, then all of the enemy Pokémon make a move. You can control your Pokémon's movements via preset tactics, such as telling them to stay close or to attack the closest enemy. And as they grow stronger, they will learn more and more specific strategies.

But certain aspects are just like those in traditional Pokémon adventures. For example, you still earn experience and gain levels, and you learn new moves accordingly. You can also have only a maximum of four Pokémon in your party at one time. Like other Pokémon games, there will be two versions of Pokémon Mystery Dungeon. But there's a twist—the Blue Rescue Team version will be exclusive to DS, while the Red Rescue Team version will come out on GBA. The two versions will be able to communicate with each other in a variety of ways. Much, much more will be revealed about this game in the coming months, but for now much of Mystery Dungeon is, indeed, a mystery. —CHRIS S.



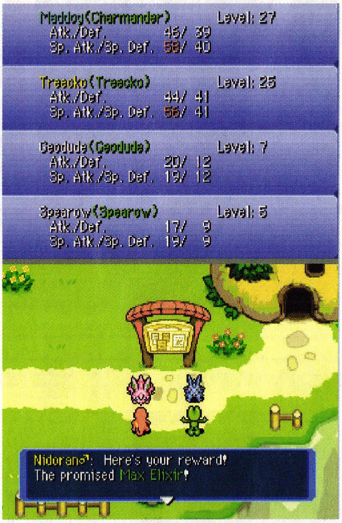
Don't be fooled by her looks—this Kangaskhan is sweet as pie.



```
Maddog      Level 27    81/ 81
Treecko     Level 25    88/ 88
Geodude     Level 6     32/ 32
Spearow     Level 4     25/ 25
```

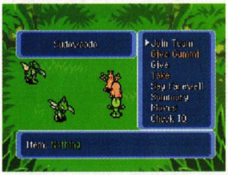
```
8F  Lv 27 HP  81/  81
```

```
Geodude gained 17 Exp. Points!
Spearow gained 17 Exp. Points!
Pinsir used Vicegrip!
```



```
Maddog(Charmander)              Level: 27
  Atk./Def.               46/ 39
  Sp. Atk./Sp. Def.       58/ 40
Treecko(Treecko)                Level: 25
  Atk./Def.               44/ 41
  Sp. Atk./Sp. Def.       56/ 41
Geodude(Geodude)                Level: 7
  Atk./Def.               20/ 12
  Sp. Atk./Sp. Def.       19/ 12
Spearow(Spearow)                Level: 5
  Atk./Def.               17/  9
  Sp. Atk./Sp. Def.       19/  9
```

```
Nidoran♂:  Here's your reward!
The promised Max Elixir!
```



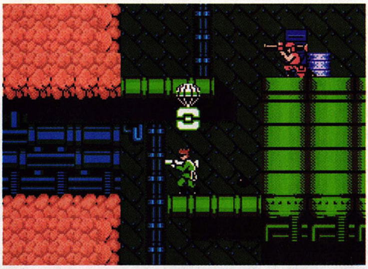
```
Sudowoodo
Item: Nothing
```

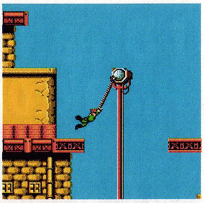
Mixing It Up

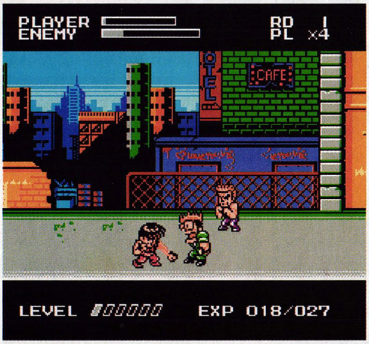
>CAPCOM CLASSICS MINI MIX

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • RELEASE: FALL 2006

Capcom has popped the cork on its massive catalog of classic games, and the vintage contents have begun trickling onto GBA in Capcom Classics Mini Mix. The budget-priced compilation contains three complete NES titles: Bionic Commando, Strider, and Mighty Final Fight. Unlike virtually every other game of its era, Bionic Commando rejected the jump ability in lieu of a grappling hook, which gave birth to a breed of action that's rarely been duplicated since. Strider, meanwhile, featured loads of exploration, a twist-filled plot that spans the globe, and RPG-like character growth in a completely different game from its more-widely recognized arcade counterpart. Similarly, Mighty Final Fight provided a cartoony, comical take on its classic arcade roots, as Mike Haggar, Cody, and Guy took to the streets of Metro City to pound punks and rescue Haggar's daughter. Judging by our experience with Mini Mix, Capcom seems to have ported all three games flawlessly, and they're playable in both their original aspect ratio and widescreen format. Now if Capcom would only reobtain the rights to *DuckTales* and *Rescue Rangers* and port them to GBA as well. . . . —CHRIS H.







PLAYER
ENEMY
RD 1
PL x4

BOW DOWN BEFORE ME!
YES ▸NO

Be da Man

>BATTLE B-DAMAN

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: ATLUS
DEVELOPER: TAKARA • RELEASE: JULY 2006

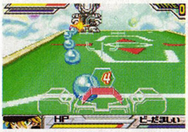
What Beyblade did for spinning tops, Battle B-Daman does for marbles—really big marbles that blast forth from robotlike B-Damans. Welcome to Cowtoon, where the locals fight first and answers questions later. Cowtoon is the starting point for a cartoon-inspired adventure. As Yamato, a young boy found among the wild cats, you strive to fulfill your destiny as a top B-Daman duelist and learn about your mysterious past along the way.

Matches take place on rectangular fields with a B-Daman at each end. You slide and rotate your weapon, load it with regenerating B-Daballs, and knock the energy out of your opponent's device. Victory earns you B-Daman parts for your signature Cobalt Blade (or cash, which you can use to buy parts). By customizing the blade, you add speed, defense, and special attacks, such as the slashing Lion Claw and the Banishing Fire, to make it even more powerful.

The game's story unfolds in cut-scenes. You select destinations and opponents from menus. As you advance, foes become stronger and new games, such as Battle Hockey, become available. When all is said and all B-Daballs are fired, you will rule the B-Daworld. —GEORGE S.

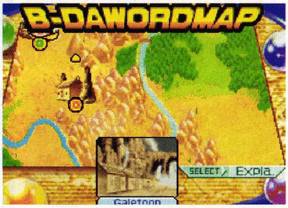
Hey, let's B-Dabattle now!
What are you waiting for?▽

The B-Daman are primed for marble shooting.



Cobalt Blade
60
Prom Doll
VS

Buy Parts
Sell Parts
Input Zero Codo

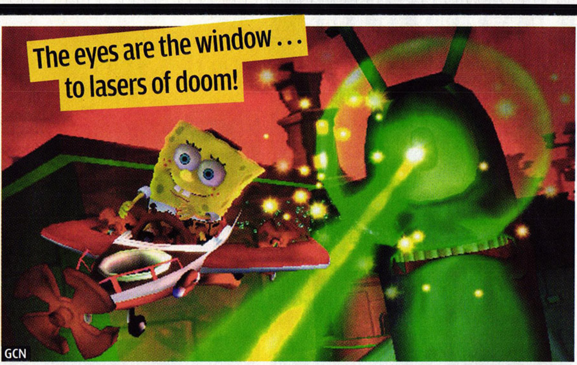


I Dream of Plankton

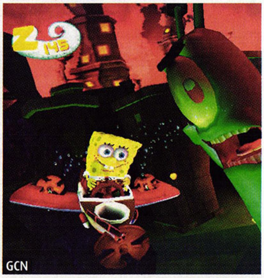
>SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: CREATURE FROM THE KRUSTY KRAB

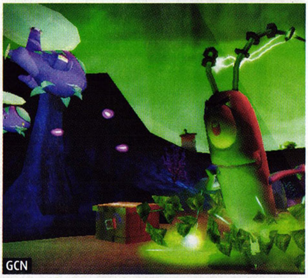
PLATFORM: GCN, Wii • PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: BLITZ GAMES • RELEASE: FALL 2006

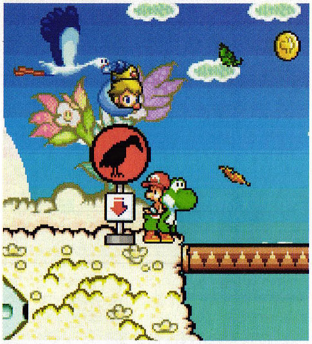
The developers of the latest *SpongeBob SquarePants* game wanted to do something different with the absorbent hero's latest title, and the result is an adventure featuring multiple playable characters, numerous game mechanics, and varied art styles set within a surreal dreamscape. Whether you're flying through the Giant Alaskan Bullworm with SpongeBob, engaging in platform action with Patrick's Starfish Man superhero persona, or smashing everything in sight as a giant-sized Plankton in a kitschy B-movie, there's no lack of variety. Although the content of the GCN and Wii versions of the game is the same, on Wii you'll utilize the controller in a variety of ways: Hold it like a flight stick for flying, use it as a steering wheel for driving, and even turn it sideways to use it like a classic NES pad in a 2.5-D chase level. —CHRIS H.


The eyes are the window . . . to lasers of doom!

GCN


GCN


GCN



Dino Riders

>YOSHI'S ISLAND 2

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: ARTOON • RELEASE: Q4 2006

At this year's E3, it was more apparent than ever that the once-mighty platformer is now an endangered species. Whereas five years ago you would have seen a high-profile entry in the genre from almost every major publisher, at this year's expo they were few and far between. Fortunately, Nintendo is doing its best to preserve the platformer with titles like Yoshi's Island 2. A sequel to one of Mario's most underrated adventures, this DS side-scroller shows incredible promise. Developer Artoon may have been responsible for a number of intriguing titles that ultimately failed to live up to their potential (Blinx, Yoshi Topsy Turvy), but with Yoshi's Island 2, it seems the team has finally hit its stride. The game boasts a charming hand-drawn visual style similar to its predecessor's, and compelling gameplay that (judging by the demo, at least) lives up to the series' lofty standards. Baby Mario isn't the only one mounting the game's titular dinosaur this time around; baby Peach and baby Donkey Kong get in on the action, as well. You can switch between the infants at certain checkpoints, and each rider bestows Yoshi with different abilities, allowing the game to throw a nice mix of platforming challenges your way. And much like New Super Mario Bros., each stage is packed with enough secrets to test the mettle of even platforming fossils like myself. —STEVE T.

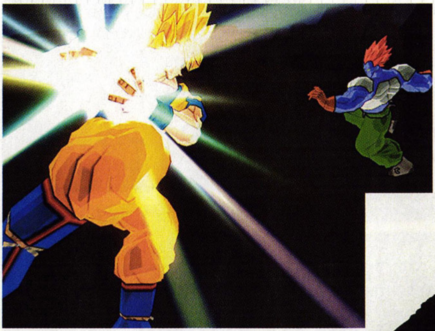
Fightin' Words

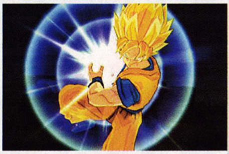
>DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI TENKAICHI 2

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: Atari
DEVELOPER: Namco Bandai/Spike • RELEASE: TBD

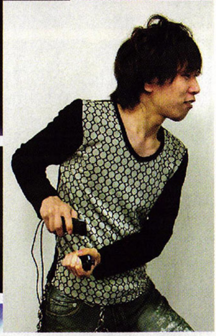
The Wii's first fighting game intends on topping even cosplay conventions as the ultimate proving ground for DBZ superfans. Japanese developer Spike, known for its wrestling series King of Colosseum and Fire Pro Wrestling, is working on the follow-up to '05's Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi, widely considered the best DBZ fighter yet made. That title didn't touch down on Nintendo's console, but for the sequel, Spike is bringing the physical action of Dragon Ball's most powerful, most kinetic moves—like the signature Kamehameha attack—to a new level of interactivity thanks to Wii.

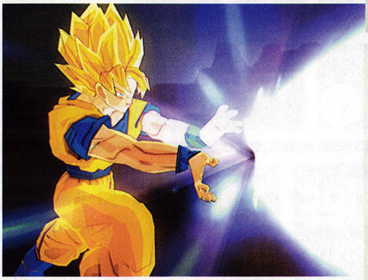
Many of DBZ's basic fighting and flying moves are mapped to the buttons on the Wii remote and nunchuk, plus they require jabbing slightly forward and to the sides with both motion-sensitive controllers. It was a lot of fun in the E3 demo, and it's in the ballpark of what you'd expect from Wii's first true fighting game. But what isn't so expected is how far Spike really plans to take the physical action required to pull off supermoves, according to the series' producer Ryo Mito at Namco Bandai. To unleash the Kamehameha, for instance, as seen in the screenshots and photos to the right, you must pull the trigger buttons on both the remote and nunchuk, twist your arms sideways, and shove straight outward. Only one supermove was at E3, but Mito says that Spike plans to put as many as it can in the final game. Imagine holding both hands over your head to charge up a fireball, then punching your fists at the TV to release a blast; or touching your finger (with remote in hand) to your temple to charge up a different kind of blast. It's a Wii concept that rivals WarioWare: Smooth Moves for sheer madness, but every DBZ fan worth his salt has acted out his fave character's feats a million times. Wii will let you live your DBZ fantasies in a more satisfying way—but be sure to avoid that antique lamp in the living room! —Steven G.

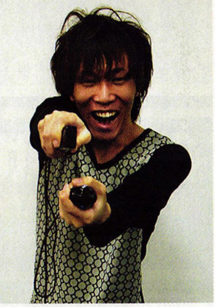




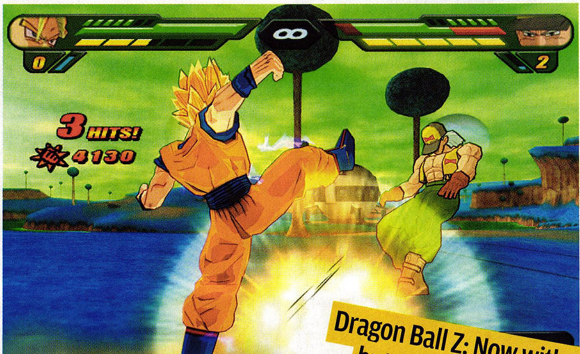
To charge up DBZ's Kamehameha attack, producer Ryo Mito shows off how you'll twist both controllers sideways . . .







. . . then strike your hands straight out to unleash the kind of blast that DBZ fans dream about being able to do in real life.



Dragon Ball Z: Now with 100% more butt-kicking Wii!

Feed the worms, Elves!

A Boy and His Dragon

>ERAGON

PLATFORM: GBA, DS • PUBLISHER: VIVENDI GAMES
DEVELOPER: AMAZE ENTERTAINMENT
RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2006

Call it a Lord of the Rings for a new generation: The Eragon book series has been flying off the shelves for the better part of three years, and now the best seller is being turned into a massive motion picture, as well as a line of video games. The eponymous hero of the novel discovers what he thinks to be a blue stone in the forest near his village. But when the "stone" hatches into a dragon, Eragon's life changes forever—now he's on the run from an evil king and his minions, guided by destiny toward greatness. Both the GBA and DS versions feature extensive stories and character development, and the gameplay of the two is completely different. The GBA version is a turn-based RPG featuring an intriguing melee system—you string together button combos to pull off special maneuvers. The DS version features a 3-D environment, with real-time action and touch-screen spell-casting. —CHRIS S.

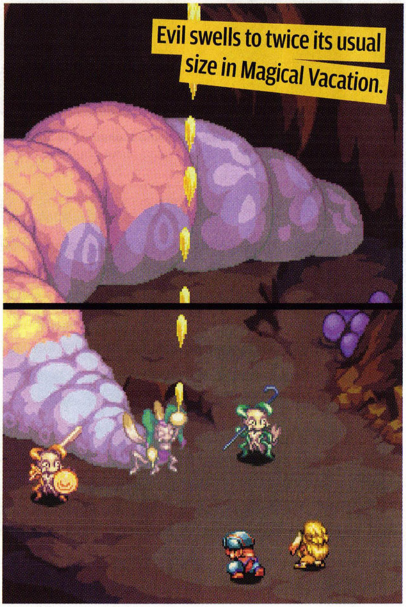
Giant Battles

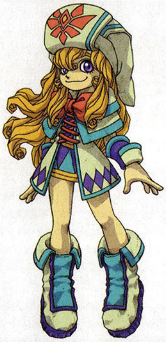
>MAGICAL VACATION

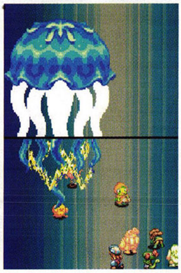
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: BROWNIE BROWN • RELEASE: FALL 2006

No matter how deep its combat system is, a superb turn-based RPG must have battles with the kind of visual sizzle that keeps on sizzling through thousands of battles. After playing the first few hours of Magical Vacation (still the temporary title), I can vouch for both. It's got a great battle system served with loads of delicious eye candy.

The plot's a bit Potter at the beginning, then goes into rare territory for fantasy, taking the students of a magic school around the cosmos on a quest to rescue a teacher. There's the hero (or heroine; your choice), who specializes in diametrically opposed light or dark magic, plus his five friends, who specialize in water, fire, wood, wind, and earth magic, all part of a circular five-element pecking order (that last one, earth, trumps water). Your attacks are of a certain element, as are your foes' defenses, so you'll have to keep the elements in mind at all times. You'll also keep an eye on the orbits of five elemental planets, and whether it's day or night. It all affects the strength of attacks and defense. That's a lot of fun, fast-paced components to keep tabs on. As for how the system is served up visually, check out our screenshots to savor the double-tall splendor of blazing effects, epic standoffs, eerie locations, and gargantuan bosses. —STEVEN G.


Evil swells to twice its usual size in Magical Vacation.



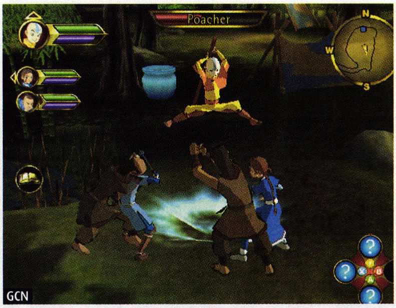


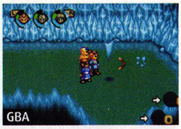
Dalai Drama

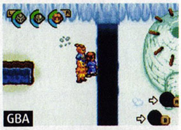
>AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER

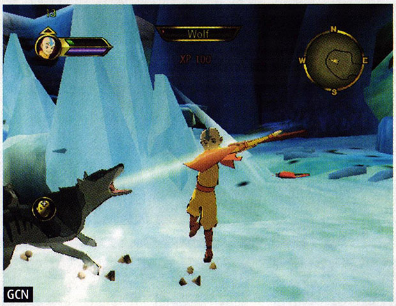
PLATFORM: Wii, GCN, DS, GBA • PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: Studio oz (consoles), Tose (handhelds)
RELEASE: Fall 2006

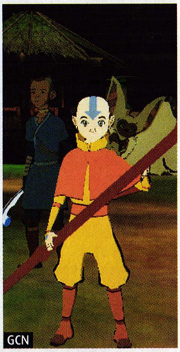
If Tibet's exiled holy honcho, the Dalai Lama, could kick butt with martial arts and bend the forces of nature to his will, he could head to his homeland and restore it to peace. And that's the gist of Nickelodeon's cool new TV show, right down to the hero Aang's bald head, orange robes, and reincarnated status. In Aang's world, he's the last Airbender, sole survivor of an aerial tribe pushed to extinction by the Fire Nation. With such a dynamic story, Avatar is surely the most interesting franchise THQ has ever picked up, and it's bringing Avatar to all Nintendo platforms as an action adventure in which you'll use Aang's magic and martial arts in a quest to master the elements of air, earth, water, and fire. In addition to GBA and GCN versions shown at right, THQ will bring Avatar to DS. The touch screen will help you learn bending moves and play minigames, like catching fish with waterbending. The Wii version will use the motion-sensing remote during combat to unleash Aang's physical and magical moves. All four versions are due this fall. —Steven G.











Into the Deep

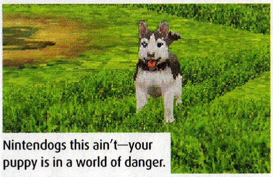
>DEEP LABYRINTH

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: Atlus
DEVELOPER: Interactive Brains • RELEASE: Fall 2006

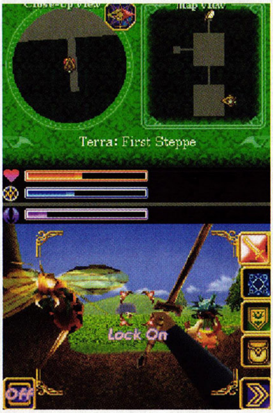
So you're on a boring family vacation when a tire blows on your dad's station wagon in front of an eerie house. Your dog takes off toward the house, your parents chase it, you chase them, and all of you fall down a hole into another dimension, where you befriend talking pink platypuses. Now it's up to you to reunite with your family. Pretty typical summer, huh?

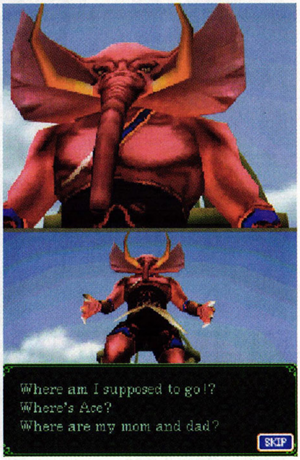
Deep Labyrinth is largely a first-person adventure, but has extensive RPG elements blended in. You gain levels through combat, and earn proficiency upgrades to your weapons when you use them properly. Aside from moving your character around with the Control Pad (or with the face buttons for lefties), you perform virtually all actions via the touch screen. Most of the time, you'll use your sword to hack up enemies, but when the situation calls for magic, you press an onscreen button then draw a particular shape to cast a spell.

We look forward to learning more about Deep Labyrinth's meditative elephants, flying gardens, and other oddities in the coming months. —Chris S.



Nintendogs this ain't—your puppy is in a world of danger.





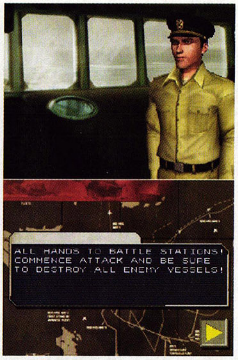
Where am I supposed to go!?
Where's Ace?
Where are my mom and dad?

All Hands on Deck

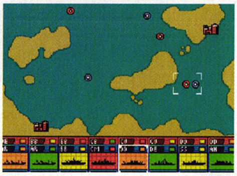
>STEEL HORIZON

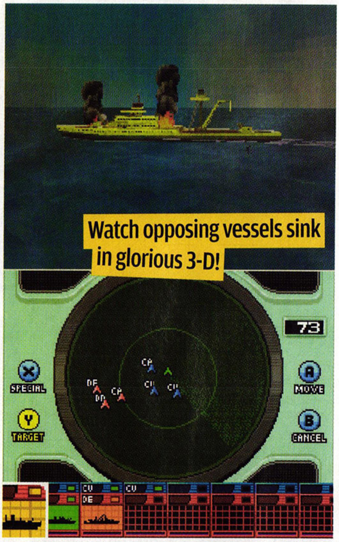
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: CLIMAX • RELEASE: FALL 2006

Konami's Steel Horizon (developed by UK-based Climax) allows armchair admirals to rule the seas with a unique mix of turn-based and real-time strategy. As commander of the United States navy during World War II, you'll position your fleet and formulate a plan of attack on the overhead campaign map. Then, once you've engaged in battle, you'll maneuver your ships and fire their guns in real time. Taking a page from genre leaders like Fire Emblem, the core strategic system is based on a rock-paper-scissors mechanic; the huge, heavily armed battleships, for instance, can easily outgun destroyers, but they're vulnerable to submarine strikes. To spice things up a bit, the game will take some significant liberties with the historical setting, both in terms of story and your vessels' capabilities. The developers promise a major plot twist partway through the campaign that will take the war in an unexpected new direction. —STEVE T.



ALL HANDS TO BATTLE STATIONS!
COMMENCE ATTACK AND BE SURE
TO DESTROY ALL ENEMY VESSELS!





Watch opposing vessels sink in glorious 3-D!

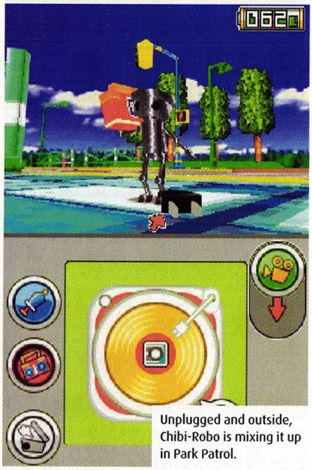
Chibi-Hero

>CHIBI-ROBO: PARK PATROL

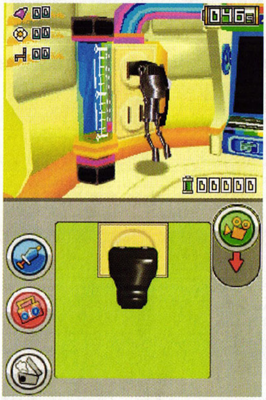
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: SKIP • RELEASE: TBD

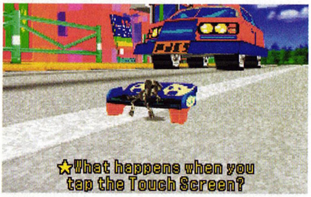
Loveable bot Chibi-Robo is getting out of the house for an adventure. When the flowers in the local park go missing, Chibi is there to get to the root of the problem. Using a water squirter, he encourages seeds to sprout and chases away havoc-spreading critters. Music from a boom box makes the plants flourish. A bicycle, a boat, and a buggie provide transportation for the pint-sized mech's patrol of the park. There's playground equipment, too. The robot rides a miniature swing, hops on a trampoline, and fires himself out of a tiny cannon, soaring over gardens and ponds.

Like Chibi's GCN game, much of the DS game's activity is given to exploration and discovery. When Chibi triggers key events, more paths open and the story advances. Aside from running and climbing, the bulk of Chibi's actions are touch-controlled, each using a unique interface, such as pedals for pushing the bicycle forward. Chibi's adventure will take seed later this year. —GEORGE S.

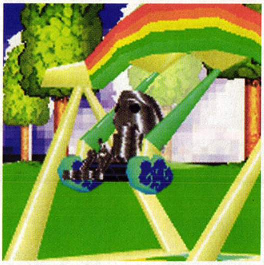


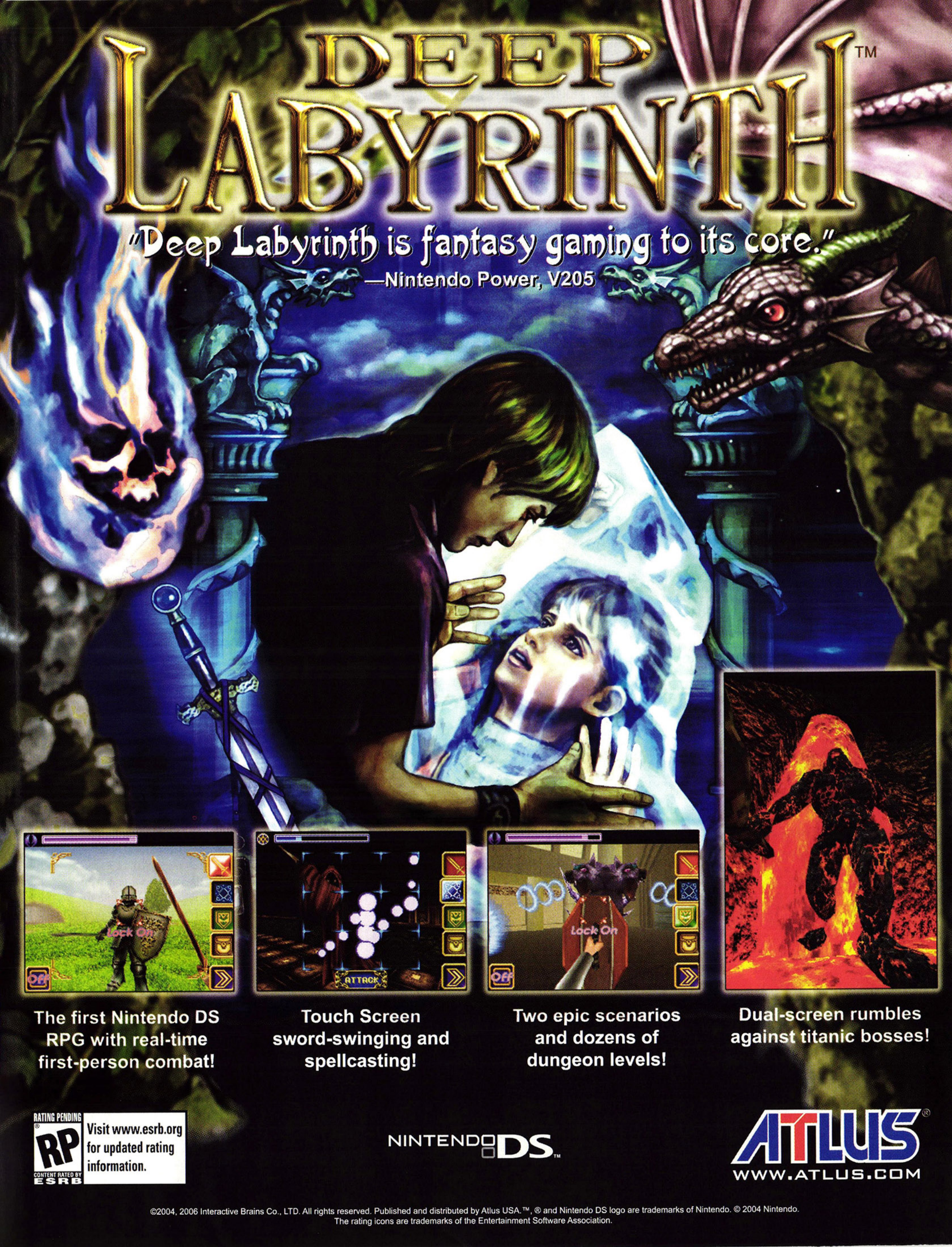
Unplugged and outside, Chibi-Robo is mixing it up in Park Patrol.





★What happens when you tap the Touch Screen?





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PRIME DIRECTIVE

Retro Studios spills the beans on the Wii-exclusive conclusion to the Metroid Prime trilogy, **Metroid Prime 3: Corruption.**

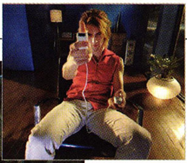
By Steve Thomason

Nintendo Power: First, can you tell us a bit about the story in Metroid Prime 3 and how it fits into the series?
Mark Pacini (Director): Well, Corruption is a direct sequel to Metroid Prime 2. The goal of the game is to wrap up the storyline that deals with Phazon, which was featured in Prime and Prime 2 as the cause of what happened to the planets that Samus visited. So in Prime, it corrupted the planet and all the creatures there. In Prime 2, it actually separated the planet into the light and dark worlds. In Prime 3, Phazon has a much more galaxy-wide effect. So the player will get to understand the fate of Phazon and why it's so important. And not only does it relate to Samus's goals in the game, but Samus herself also gets corrupted. So her ability set can change over the course of the game and kind of tie into the storyline. "Corruption" is not only a story theme, but also a game mechanic that we're using throughout Prime 3.

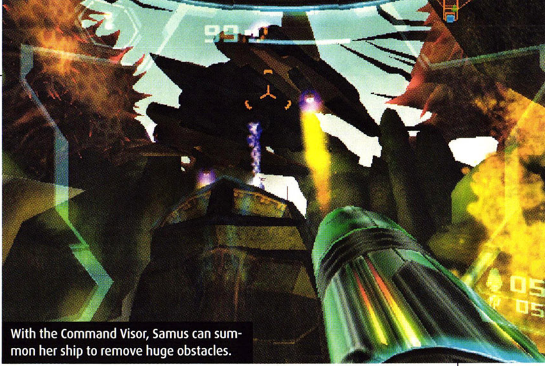
NP: Can you share any examples of those game mechanics?
MP: The main gimmick behind the corruption is the idea of hyper mode. Hyper mode has been something that we've used in the Prime series before, but it's also been seen in Super Metroid at the very end. Well, because of this Phazon corruption, we're giving the player the ability to go into that mode at any time and become very powerful, which opens up a subset of abilities that Samus will have based on this Phazon corruption. The caveat to that is while you're extremely powerful for a period of time, you also have the possibility of dying. So you're kind of balancing the system at the same time. You would naturally time out of the system or you would use up all your Phazon while you're shooting weapons and things like that. Your corruption fuels this hyper mode, so as you shoot weapons your health bar switches to a different type of management system. So you can stay in hyper mode for a longer period of time or you can use all your Phazon and get out of hyper mode very quickly. But it's kind of up to the player to balance that system and the risk involved in it. So it's actually something the player will use fairly often during the game, and that's kind of something new that we're offering for Prime 3.

NP: With the new control scheme that the Wii enables, will the game place a greater emphasis on action?
Kensuke Tanabe (Producer): Well because it's part of the Metroid Prime series, it's important to keep a balance. It will still have many exploration elements as well as the shooting elements. But because of the new Wii controller, it may be easier and more intuitive for the player to shoot at enemies, so there is the possibility that there will be a little bit more focus on the shooting than before.

NP: What are some of the most important things that the team learned from the first two games, and how are they applying those lessons to Corruption?
MP: There are many things that we learned. One of them is what people maybe would like to see improved about the game. Certain parts, like the re-traversal aspects. We always try to understand what parts of re-traversal are fun and what parts are frustrating for people. So we put a lot of thought going into Prime 3 into how we can improve the way the player makes their way through the game. Re-traversal and exploration are fundamental to the Metroid series, so that's really not going to change, but how the player does it and to what degree they do it is something that we're really making improvements on. Also with the difficulty level. We think that Prime was more of a game for Metroid fans and gamers, and Prime 2



Hopefully the Wii controller will take Prime 3 where no first-person shooter has gone before.



With the Command Visor, Samus can summon her ship to remove huge obstacles.

was for those fans as well. They were tuned a little bit on the difficult side. And I think that while the game is still going to be very challenging, we would like to make sure that a wide variety of people can play Corruption. But I don't think fundamentally it's going to change the way the game is. It's just something we're keeping in mind. We don't want to scare people away that might be intimidated by a game like this. Those are really two main things that we've learned over the past two titles.

> "We're making a conscious effort to utilize the technology ... for solid gameplay reasons."
> —Mark Pacini

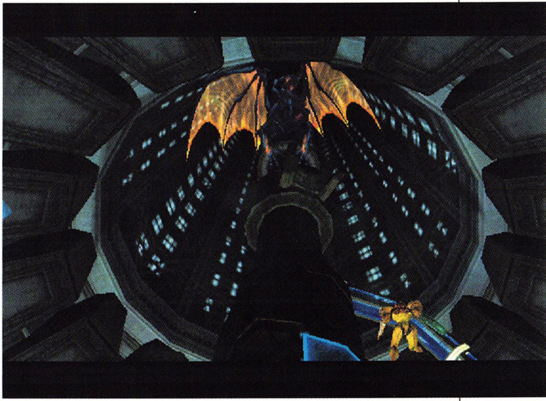
NP: Judging by the demo, the game looks like it might be a little more cinematic than the first two. Is that a focus for the team?

MP: Yeah, that was very much a conscious thing that we're doing because the system's more powerful [than the GameCube]. It allows us to create larger environments that are just as detailed as Prime and Prime 2. So we get to tell the story, not always in cinematics. We can tell it by what's going on around you. I think that's extremely important, and we're doing that to all the locations that the player is going to be visiting throughout this game. We're really making a conscious effort to utilize the technology not to just make things look pretty, which they're going to, but actually for solid gameplay reasons. Like why can you see far into the distance? Because it's actually important to what's happening in the game.

Bryan Walker (Senior Producer): Samus is part of a bigger struggle.

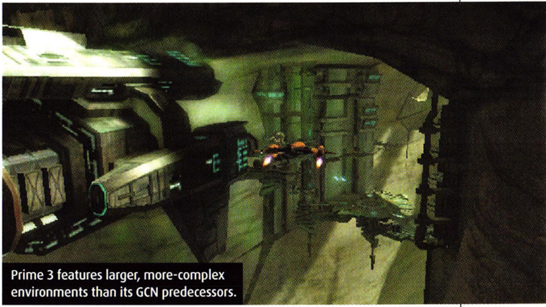
NP: Can you talk a bit about the role of the other bounty hunters?

MP: Maybe a little bit? [Laughs] There are other bounty hunters in the game that are heavily tied to what's happening in the story as far as corruption. So the things that are happening to Samus, she can possibly see through the result of what's happening to these other hunters as well. Again, this corruption theme is an underlying element to the entire game. These bounty hunters aren't just other characters in the game; they actually are important to telling the story of what could potentially happen to Samus.



NP: Prime is noted for being one of the most visually impressive series on the GameCube. What are your thoughts on Wii from a hardware-horsepower standpoint?

BW: It's obviously a more powerful machine. With Prime 3 we have been able to improve all aspects of the game as a result. Visually we've got bloom lighting. We've been able to improve our animation system to take advantage of the new hardware. And the environments are also significantly bigger. Even better, it's a developer-friendly machine. Power is nothing if you can't use it. And that has been a big factor for us. We've been able to create better content very quickly with the Wii.



Prime 3 features larger, more-complex environments than its GCN predecessors.

NP: Will Corruption be a launch title?

BW: Yes.

NP: Will Samus visit multiple planets in the game, and will there be any ship-flying stages?

MP: Yes, Samus will go to other planets. It's kind of important to the corruption theme and the storyline that Samus goes to other planets. She's actually stopping the corruption on multiple planets. She'll be able to use her ship, not necessarily for direct flying to these planets. But conversely to that, we are using the ship in a very unique way for Prime 3 in that there's a new visor called the Command Visor, which allows Samus to, from a third-person view, command her ship

remotely to do things in the environment. So the ship can come in and do bombing runs or it can come in and lift really huge objects for you, or you can actually use it to traverse areas as a platform. So it actually becomes another tool in Samus's arsenal. We thought that was a unique way of bringing in the ship.

NP: Will you be able to travel back and forth between planets?
MP: Absolutely. Again, it's fundamental in Metroid to go back to previous areas and either explore more or unlock a different path. So that will definitely still be the case.

NP: Will there be other new visors in addition to the one you just mentioned, and can you talk a bit about those or any new beams in the game?
MP: Beyond the Command Visor there's the Combat Visor and Scan Visor, which appeared in the previous games. We're also bringing back the X-ray Visor for this game. In some of the previous Metroids, because of how the design turned out, sometimes people weren't able to use the visors to their fullest abilities because Samus has such a large ability set. So what we wanted to do was make sure that with the X-ray Visor it's not just for looking through walls or for invisible platforms and stuff, which will still be there, but we also want [the visor] to have a relationship to her other abilities. For example, one of the beams that Samus will get allows her to shoot through walls, so you can use the X-ray Visor to see through objects and maybe target certain things behind a wall that you wouldn't normally be able to see, and use the beam in conjunction with the visor. Also with the beams, we're doing a little different system with Metroid Prime 3 than we did in Prime 1 and 2 where you had selectable beams. In Prime 3, we're going with a stacking system similar to, say, Super Metroid. It's kind of a harkening back to that. We thought that system worked really well, especially for what we were trying to do with this game, so the beam will stack and keep all its inherent abilities even though you're getting different weapons layered on top of it. And that goes for all weapons that Samus will have. Her beam stacks, her missile stacks, and also the grapple-beam stacks.

NP: What role will the Metroids play in the game?
MP: They'll be back. We've actually gotten a lot of comments about maybe Metroids don't make enough appearances in the Metroid Prime games. Although the Metroid Prime series storyline doesn't necessarily revolve around Metroids, per se, we do feel they're important to the franchise. And people like seeing them; it's very nostalgic. So Metroids will definitely be back, but they also serve a definite story purpose and you will see more of them in this game.

NP: How about the Chozo? Will they play a role in this game?
MP: Umm ... yes. [Laughs]

NP: Will there be anything with the light and dark worlds like in Echoes?
MP: No, that was for that particular planet.

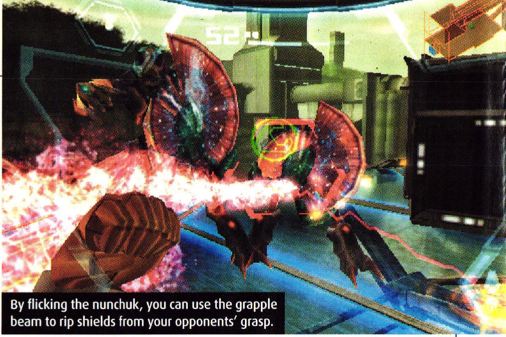
> **"Metroids will definitely be back... and you will see a lot more of them in this game."**
> **—Mark Pacini**

NP: How about multiplayer or Wi-Fi play?
BW: We will not have multiplayer in Metroid Prime 3 in the same format that we had with Metroid Prime 2. However, we are excited about the opportunities that the WiiConnect24 brings to the table, and we're seriously considering a variety of different functions to take advantage of that.

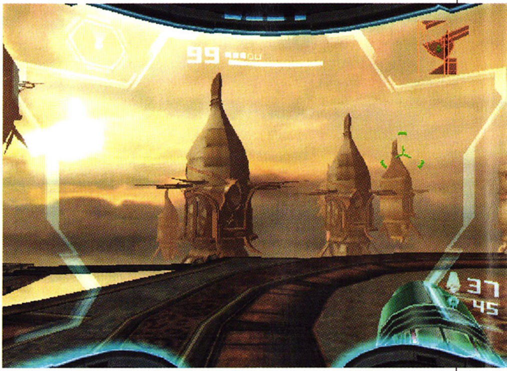
NP: Anything else you would like our readers to know about the game?
KT: As you may know, this is the last game in the Metroid Prime trilogy. But at the same time, we will continue expanding the franchise. You saw an example of that with Metroid Prime Hunters on DS.

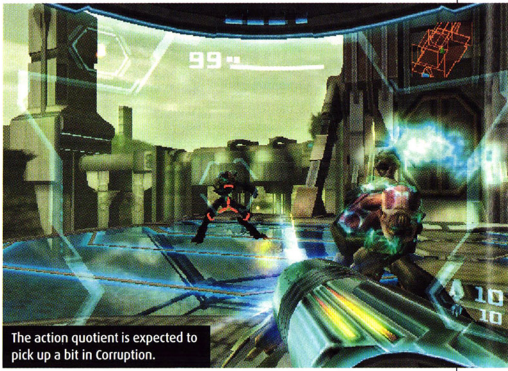
NP: What's in the future for Retro? Will you take Metroid in a different direction, or will it be something new?
BW: Retro won't close down when we're finished with Metroid Prime 3. [Laughs] But we look forward to new challenges.
MP: What would you like to see us work on?

NP: I would be intrigued to see something brand-new. I'd love to see what Retro can do with something original.
BW: We're very fortunate that we have a lot of extremely talented developers, and I think a new challenge like you've described would be a great venue for them to really flex their creative muscle.

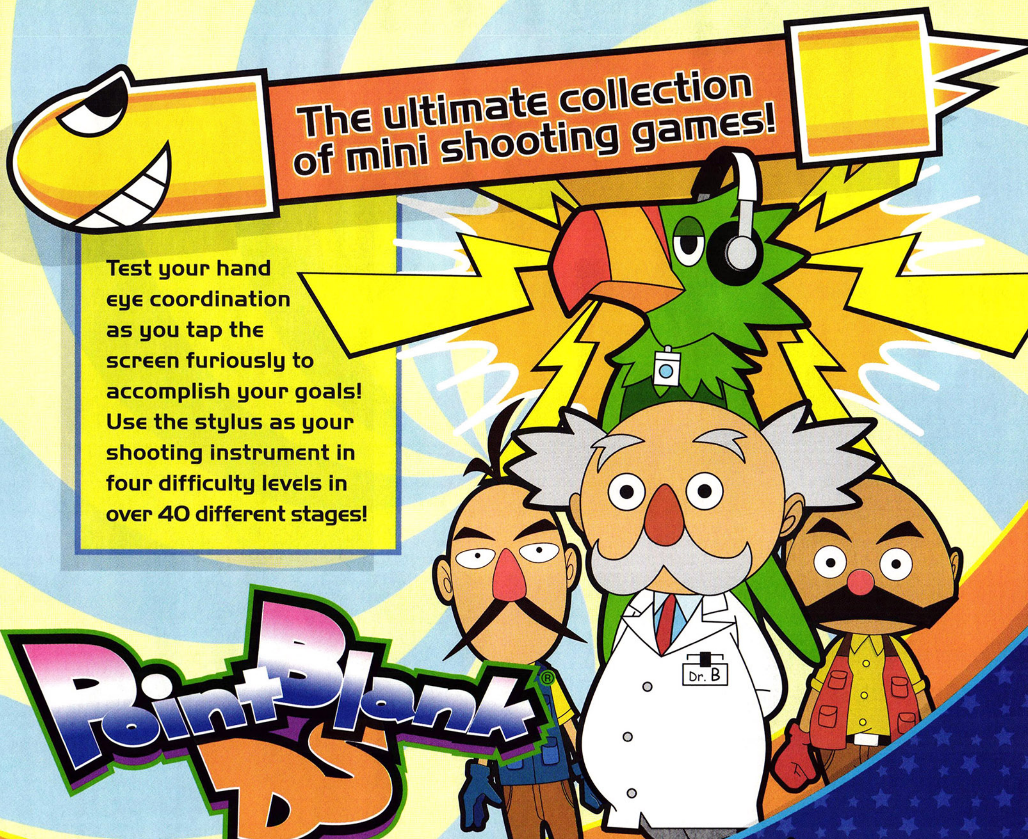


By flicking the nunchuk, you can use the grapple beam to rip shields from your opponents' grasp.





The action quotient is expected to pick up a bit in Corruption.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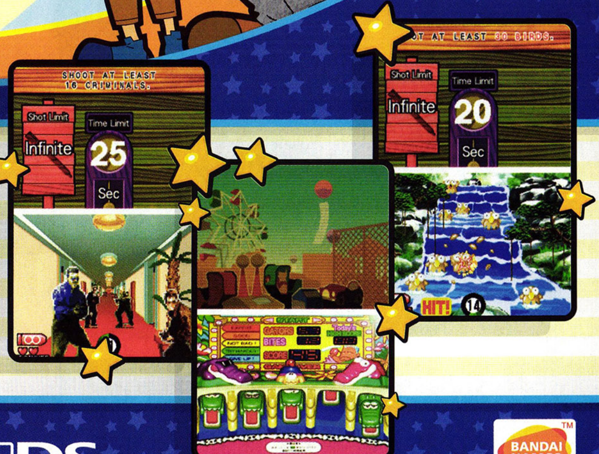
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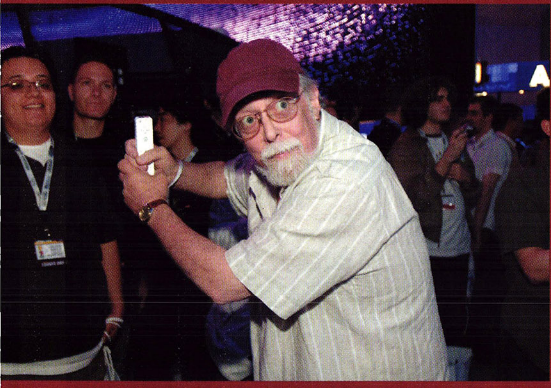
FIELD OF DREAMS

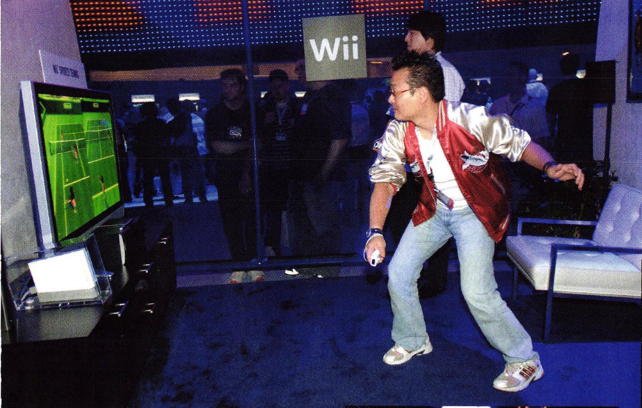
The line to get into the E3 Wii zone was crazy enough. But what happened with Wii Sports and Wii Music was pure and wonderful insanity.

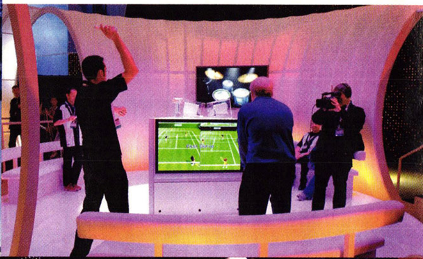
By Steven Grimm

After the typical high-voltage overload, this year's E3 left gamers with great anticipation for what's to come, as always. But anyone who was at this year's expo would tell you it was far from the usual fare, and not only because the three majors were making the case for their new consoles. It was because Wii drew audiences like no other system in E3 history. When the expo kicked off on Wednesday, May 10, visitors walked toward Nintendo's booth expecting standard lines—an hour, two hours tops. But by Thursday word had spread, and the booth demanded a five-hour wait. When the doors opened on Friday, onlookers ran to the Wii booth to jockey for position.

When I walked the length of the line on Friday, I knew that I had never seen such a superqueue at E3, but I had seen it *somewhere*. As I overheard people fervently debating the correct Zelda chronology, whether Bowser or Fawful is the greatest Mario villain, and what new characters should join the freshly announced Super Smash Bros. Brawl—I recalled standing in line with hundreds of people for the opening nights of the *Star Wars* prequels and *The Lord of the Rings* flicks. But the Wii line was much, much bigger than those. Where had I seen this kind of crowd?







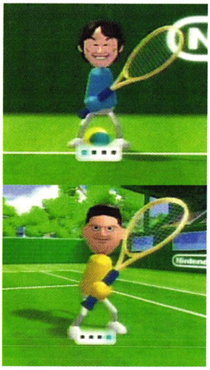
As word spread of the tennis match held during Nintendo's media conference, people lined up to see for themselves if the demo truly felt like a heated match.

It's hard to say how many of E3's 60,000 attendees infiltrated the Wii area, but it seemed like they were all in the booth at once. Many hard-core Nintendo fans simply dashed to the demos that featured their favorite series, like Super Mario Galaxy, Metroid Prime 3: Corruption, and The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. Others queued up to get the widest experience of Wii games possible, from the driving in Nintendo's Excite Truck to the first-person shooting and slashing in Ubisoft's Red Steel, using every facet of the Wii's remote and nunchuk. The buzz in many of the demo areas centered on a mixture of the new Wii motion-influenced control and that good old-fashioned gamer intensity. But there was a radically different energy emerging from other demos—the ones categorized as Wii Sports and Wii Music.

I gotta admit that I approached the Wii Sports and Wii Music games with skeptical curiosity, like checking out a sideshow to see if its bearded lady had glued on her mustache or its flipper baby was really just a toddler in a scuba suit. Before the expo started, Nintendo revealed Wii Sports and Wii Music at its media conference, which Shigeru Miyamoto kicked off by conducting an video game orchestra, and closed by playing a very animated video game tennis match with Nintendo president Satoru Iwata, Nintendo of America's heavy hitter Reggie Fils-Aime, and a contest winner called up from the audience. Sure, it all looked crazy and fun onstage, but was it the real deal? Or just stagecraft? Iwata had revealed that Wii Sports in particular was more than just a fun demo. It would be a multi-game launch title that would include tennis, baseball, and golf and that would appeal to casual gamers and people who'd never touched a game. Watching real people at play with the E3 demos—the casuals, the nongamers, and the hard-cores—would be the true test of whether Nintendo was onto something huge with Wii Sports.

Wii Sports: Tennis was housed in one of the Wii area's open living-room

If your gaming room is wide enough, you can spread out to play like the Nintendo pros did at the pre-E3 conference. If not, no worries: you can play in a staggered 4P formation without blocking each other's signal.



Miyamoto and Reggie put on their game faces using the face editor.

After taking a few light, experimental swipes in Wii Sports: Baseball, most people learned to put a ton of oomph into their swings to clear the fence.

settings, where players stepped out of the crowd and sat down for a spell with a Wii game. Or stood up, in the case of singles Tennis matches. As two players at a time came into the tennis living room, they each grabbed a Wii remote and with no explanation needed, started serving up lobs, slices, and backhands as if they'd been doing it their whole life. In a way, they had been. Wii Sports boiled the challenge down to the intuitive basics, and who hasn't used a tennis racket at least a few times in real life? After a few awkward seconds, most players understood that only their arm was directly connected to the game, since the in-game character would swing in sync with the player's remote-holding hand. But unlike conventional tennis video games, which throw court-roaming control into the mix, Tennis put the game characters on autopilot so they would run for the ball on their own. So did this all-arm take on tennis work?

Like a charm. Time and time again, two players would hop into the Tennis room and smack the ball back and forth, getting deeper and deeper into the illusion of playing a real, physical game of tennis, until one person won the match. The first time I watched a match finish up, I heard one competitor say to the other as they walked off the living-room court, "That was fun!" Two matches later, I heard the same thing: "That was fun!" The next match, I heard it again—the same words and enthusiasm. Which freaked me out. I finally realized where I'd heard that exact phrase before—and seen the superlong megaline: the Goliath roller coaster at Six Flags Magic Mountain. That was it precisely: I'd once gladly stood in line for many hours to ride Goliath with a billion other people; then I'd heard people, exiting the ride after the thrill of 255-foot vertical drops at 85 mph, expressing the same exact sentiment to their partners: "That was fun!"

That's not the typical gamer reaction to having a great time with a game. We're rarely so giddy—and there was a whole lotta giddiness going on. We even heard it from attendees who were clearly at E3 on business but probably couldn't point out the Z Button on a GCN controller to save their lives. And although I saw it the most with Tennis, I found the same lunatic energy and raw excitement when people went to bat with baseball and teed off with golf. I also heard it from players who took on conducting in Wii Music: Orchestra and bashed away at Wii Music: Drums. Sure, some people walked away scratching their heads, wondering what the appeal was, but the majority

STEROID-FREE SUPERSTARS

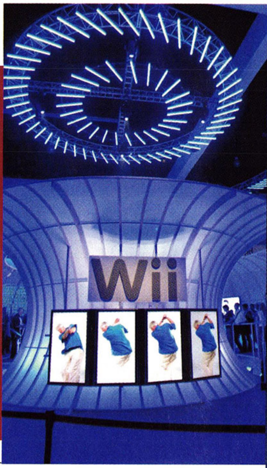
Three games have been confirmed as part of the Wii Sports launch title. While titles like Madden NFL 07 are translating their signature gameplay into Wii control, Nintendo has rethought tennis, baseball, and golf for the Wii remote.

Lobs and swings will be second nature in Wii Sports: Tennis, which puts the racket directly into your hand via the remote. Just be sure not to give your couchmate a sharp backhand.

Every game's a home-run derby with Wii Sports: Baseball. Even if you've never done more than bunt in real life, if you can swing the remote, you'll have a shot at landing an endorsement deal.

From the tee-off to the putting green, Wii Sports: Golf will bring the whole course into your living room with simple, intuitive swings of the remote.

In the core of the Wii zone, musicians hammered at Wii Music: Drums to pound out drum solos, and occasionally jam in a split-screen two-player mode that flooded the Wii area with high-volume percussion.



For Wii Sports: Golf, players held the remote like a club to try for a hole in one or to putt down the course.

fell under the simple spell of the games. They *were* the real deal.

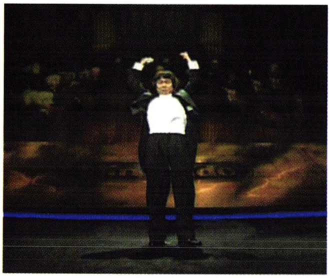
My skepticism having been put to rest, I sat down with Wii Sports producer Katsuya Eguchi to learn more about the future of Wii Sports and Wii Music, and to learn the secret to their surprising success. I mentioned that the E3 reactions reminded me of the Goliath reactions at Magic Mountain. Eguchi, better known for his work on the Animal Crossing series, saw the connection right off the bat: "The experience of fun, whether through speed or movement, is something that is very, very direct. On a rollercoaster, riders aren't thinking about the experience; they're letting it happen. Tennis is so intuitive, controlled without much thought, that it just becomes a natural experience."

As for the simple style of the games, Eguchi points out that, while Nintendo continues to push sophisticated graphics in video games like Twilight Princess, the Wii Sports and Wii Music games were designed to dramatically emphasize the direct Wii connection between the player and the game. In addition, the rounded character designs will show off Wii's face customization (see the chipper Miyamoto and aggro-looking Reggie on page 38), which will be part of the Wii hardware itself and enable both freehand facial design and premade-face selection.

Eguchi also pointed out that, though the games tap into the power of players' motions, they're about providing the *feeling* of playing a sport—not actually playing the sport. "When playing real baseball, you not only have to time your swing; you have to make contact with the ball at the right angle," he noted. "With Wii Sports, you generally only have to time it correctly. It's not as though some people on the E3 floor *are* actually able to hit home runs, but they are hitting home runs."

Eguchi revealed that baseball and golf, which focused only on basic Wii control at E3, will be broadened into competitive sports, just like the tennis game was. Golf will include full courses (the number of holes is still undetermined), and baseball will present innings with base runners on autopilot, plus a two-player mode in which one player uses the remote to throw the ball while the other swings the bat.

One other Wii Sports demo shown at E3, a flying game controlled by holding the remote like a paper airplane, is actually part of a Wii Motor Sports category that might see the light of day in the future, said Eguchi, and could include other easy-to-drive concepts like a Wave Race game. The Wii Music conducting and drumming demos are also under consideration for future release, and could be joined by other ideas that Eguchi's team is incubating, such as a guitar-playing game. As for the future of Wii Sports, the producer says that other sports may be considered for the line, possibly even for a launch title. Will the public see Wii Sports as a major hit come launch day? If the E3 crowds are any sign, Wii Sports will be a home run.



Miyamoto opened Nintendo's conference by conducting Zelda music in Wii Music: Orchestra.

Director Steven Spielberg, currently working on projects with EA, swung by for a tennis match with Miyamoto.

Koji Kondo, Nintendo's chief sound designer, got into the orchestral action.

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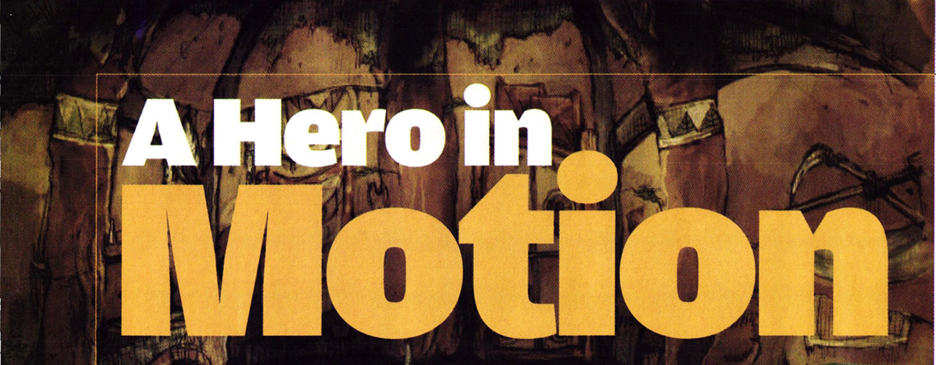
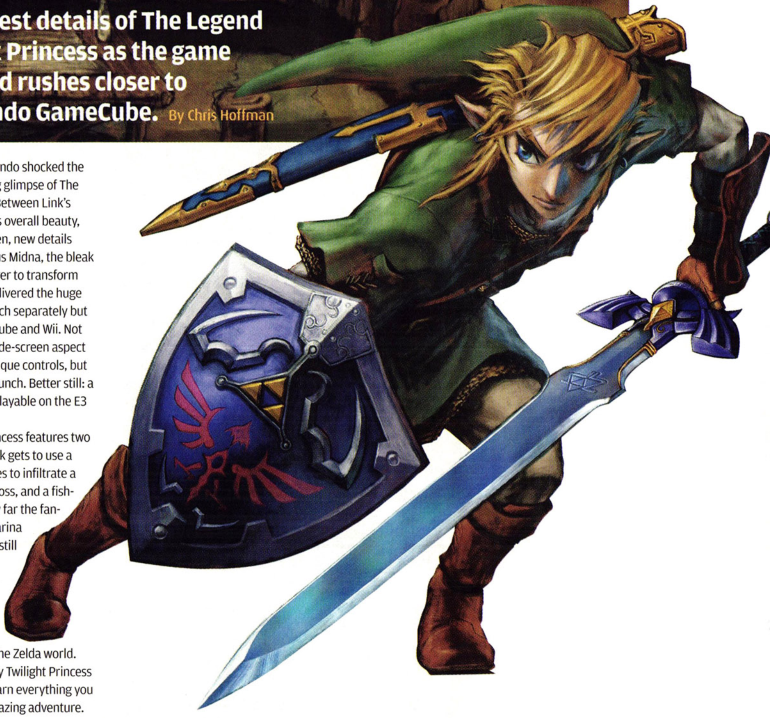


A Hero in Motion

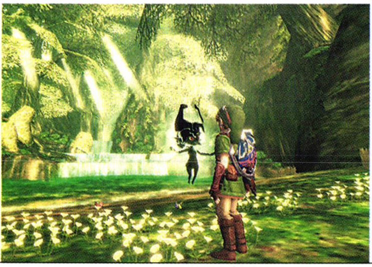
Delve into the latest details of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess as the game leaps onto Wii and rushes closer to release on Nintendo GameCube.

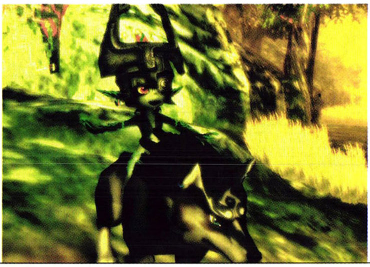
By Chris Hoffman

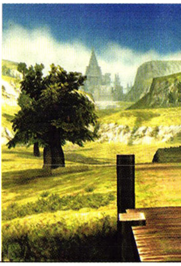


It feels like an eternity since Nintendo shocked the gaming world with the first stunning glimpse of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. Between Link's more-mature design and the game's overall beauty, gamers were mesmerized. Since then, new details have slowly emerged: the mysterious Midna, the bleak twilight realm, Link's surprising power to transform into a wolf. At E3 2006, Nintendo delivered the huge news that Twilight Princess will launch separately but simultaneously on Nintendo GameCube and Wii. Not only will the Wii version feature a wide-screen aspect ratio and take advantage of Wii's unique controls, but the game will be available at Wii's launch. Better still: a brand-new demo of the game was playable on the E3 show floor.

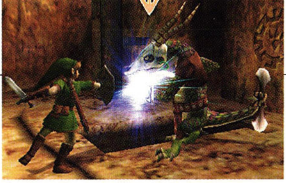
The E3 2006 demo of Twilight Princess features two areas: the Goron Mines, in which Link gets to use a myriad of skills, tools, and techniques to infiltrate a dungeon and battle an impressive boss, and a fishing hole that demonstrated just how far the fan-favorite pastime has come since Ocarina of Time. Even though the game was still in preliminary form (meaning any number of details are likely to differ in the games' final versions), the demo was extremely polished, featuring tight gameplay, gorgeous graphics, and total immersion into the Zelda world. You might not have been able to play Twilight Princess yourself, but if you read on, you'll learn everything you need to know about Link's latest amazing adventure.







Live by the Sword



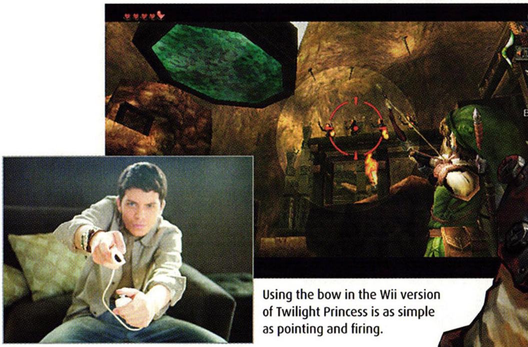
The Goron Mines consist primarily of a sprawling, wooden walkway spanning a water-filled canyon—one false step and you'll tumble into the drink, searching for a ladder to climb back up. At the beginning of the area, one of the demo's most intriguing revelations comes to light when a shadowy, semi-transparent version of Midna emerges from Link's shadow to offer advice. Much like Navi in Ocarina of Time, Midna pops up periodically to provide hints, and can also be summoned manually with the press of a button (the Z Button on GCN, or up on the Wii control pad).

As you use the analog stick (in both the GCN and Wii versions of the game) to move Link through the crate-littered dungeon, Link's swordsmanship is put to the test against a goblinlike enemy. The swordplay is largely the same as it was in The Wind Waker and in the E3 2005 version of Twilight Princess: Lock onto enemies by holding down a shoulder button (L on GCN, Z on Wii's nunchuk), and cut the enemy down to size by pressing the B Button to attack or the A Button to perform actions, like a dodge or a jumping strike. Unlike in recent 3-D Zelda games, Link always keeps his shield at the ready in combat, and pressing the R Button on GCN results in an enemy-stunning parry move. On Wii, however, you parry by actually thrusting forward with the remote (representing the shield in Link's right hand). After you knock down the goblin (as long as you're still locked onto it), you can press A on GCN or whip the Wii nunchuk forward to execute a finishing stab that sends the enemy to the great beyond.

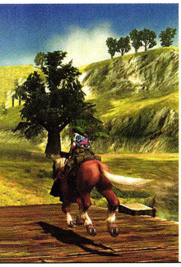
Farther into the Goron Mines, mobs of well-armed goblins and lizard creatures guard the path to the boss's lair—providing Link with the ideal time to utilize his trademark spin attack and put the hurt on numerous foes at once. Though you execute the spin attack via traditional methods (spinning the analog stick 360 degrees and attacking, or holding and releasing the B Button) on GCN, on Wii you can activate the move by shaking the nunchuk back and forth. The Wii method for unleashing Link's spin is surprisingly responsive, and makes the move easier to activate than ever before.

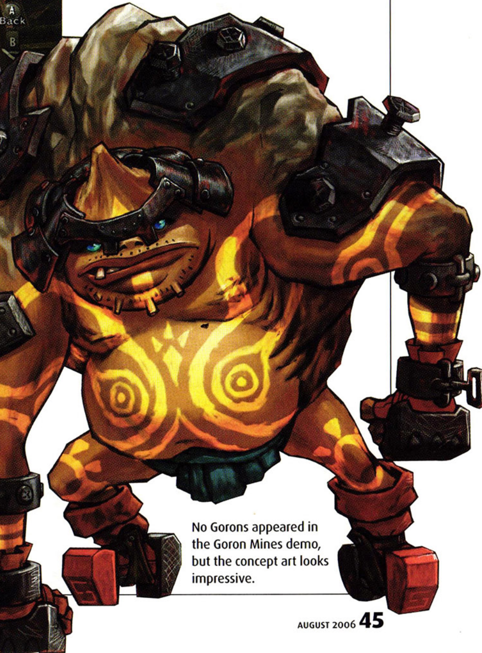
All of Treasures

Many obstacles bar Link's progress through the mine, but several tools are available to aid him. One of the most important is Link's trusty bow—essential for taking out a group of goblin archers that ambushes our hero as he heads across the walkway. On GameCube, aiming is accomplished the old-fashioned way—by holding down the item button and taking aim with the analog stick in first-person view—but on Wii, it's as simple as pointing and shooting. In the Wii version, a circle appears in the center of the screen when Link's bow is drawn; if you move the onscreen cursor within the circle you can hit an enemy with pinpoint accuracy, and if you move the cursor outside the circle, you'll reposition your view for better aim. The bow also uses one of the Wii remote's unique features: a speaker that, in this case, produces the sound of a bow string as you pull back and fire.

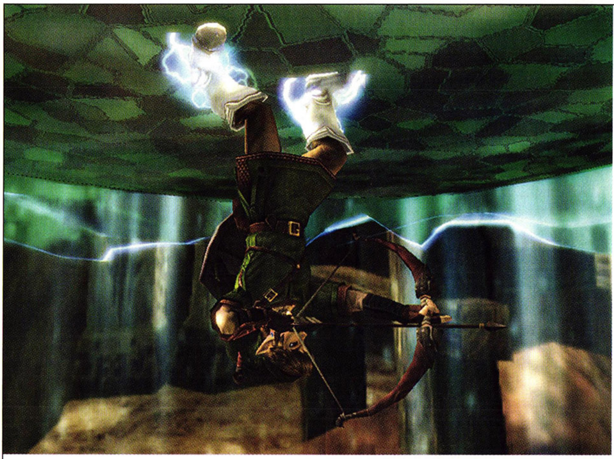


Using the bow in the Wii version of Twilight Princess is as simple as pointing and firing.





No Gorons appeared in the Goron Mines demo, but the concept art looks impressive.



Do not adjust your magazine—Link's supposed to be upside down. Magnetized Iron Boots open up incredible possibilities.

Beyond the archers, the walkway forks. To the right, the path narrows and leads to what appears to be a dead end, while heading left leads to a lizard-creature enemy and a sealed door. After slaying the lizard—it's tougher than the goblin, but not by much—you're left with the sealed door and four propeller-topped pillars. The setting calls for an item revealed in last year's E3 demo: the Gale Boomerang. As in last year's demo, you can lock onto objects with the boomerang (by pressing R on GCN or B on Wii), then release the boomerang to send its gusty power toward the targets in sequence. Even if you hit all four propellers, the door won't necessarily open; only by paying attention to a pattern on the ground and hitting the blades in the correct order will you hear the familiar Zelda success chime as the stone door sinks into the ground.

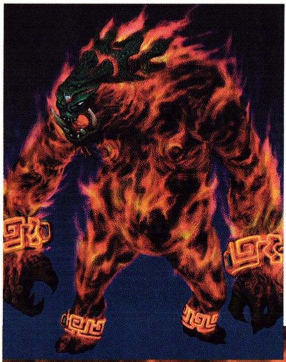
Continuing through the door and up a pathway, you'll come under attack from two more goblin archers. Unfortunately for them, they're positioned right next to a powder-filled wooden barrel—one direct hit with an arrow will blow the archers sky-high. As you maneuver along the rocky pathway, you'll come across a rusty, cranelike machine etched with symbols. A circular panel attached to the machine's protruding arm hints at the relic's purpose, but standing on a nearby switch produces no effect. Luckily, Midna suggests using something heavy to jar the switch, and your inventory contains just the thing: Iron Boots. Equipping items in the GCN game is similar to in previous Zeldas, but in the Wii version, you can access the item menu by pointing the remote at the item icon in the upper-right corner of the screen and pressing the A Button, after which you can map three different items to the left, right, and down positions on the Control Pad. (Similarly, you can access the game's full-screen map by pointing and clicking on the map display in the lower-left corner.) Equipping the boots is just the ticket; the machine's gears start turning, a blue field emits from the circular panel, and the arm begins to move back and forth. Another hint from Midna reveals that the circular panel is a powerful magnet. By standing under the magnet and re-equipping the Iron Boots, Link gets pulled onto the panel—where he can still move freely, albeit upside down—which transports him to the end of the canyon and a waiting door.

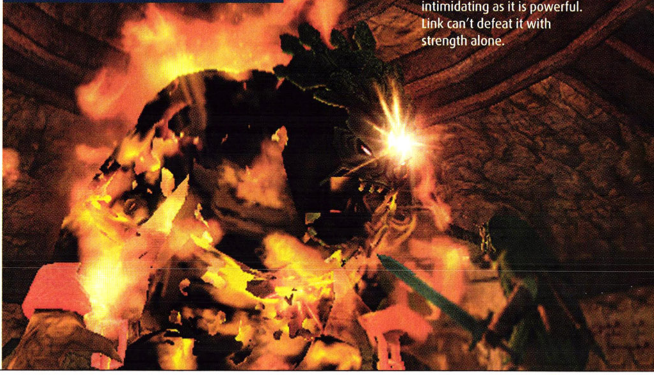
Of course, if you'd taken the right fork earlier, you'd discover there's more to the dead end than meets the eye. By switching to the Clawshot—Twilight Princess's version of the famed Hookshot—Link can take a shortcut by grappling to a distant ledge covered in metal mesh. Upon pulling himself to the top, Link can claim a 10-Rupee bonus, then jump down to the end of the canyon. No matter which path you take, you'll end up at the same door.

Into the Fire

Behind the door lies an ember-filled cavern; from Link's position on a metal scaffold, you can practically feel the heat rising from the deadly, glowing magma below. A few more enemies hamper Link's progress, but they're no match for the hero's bow and blade skills; if you really want to humiliate the goblins, you can parry to knock them into the flaming depths. Link's next challenge is to get past the sea of magma. With the drawbridge raised, the way seems impassable, but Midna again comes to the rescue by suggesting that you snap the ropes that hold up the bridge. One well-placed arrow sends the bridge slamming down, and the door to the boss's lair comes into sight.

The chains hanging from the boss's door are ominous—but are they to keep you out, or to keep the boss in? After you step inside, it doesn't matter; the door seals shut behind you, and the monstrosity of a boss reveals itself. As it breaks free of its bonds and flames erupt from its body, it resembles a giant Goron crossbred with the Balrog from *The Lord of the Rings*. The behemoth is powerful; its flames are intense. Link's sword alone has no effect on the boss's relentless fury. Fortunately, a glowing gem on its head reveals a weak point. By using the proper tools and exploiting the chains dangling from the boss's limbs, Link can bring the giant to its knees and claim victory; we can only wonder how the battle will play out in the final version of the game.

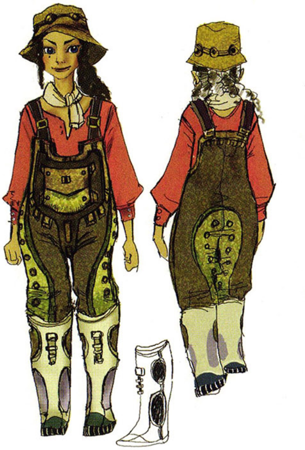


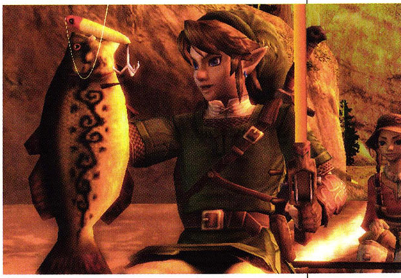


The boss of the mines is as intimidating as it is powerful. Link can't defeat it with strength alone.

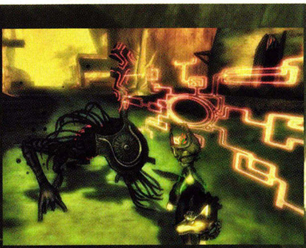
Hook, Line, & Sinker

If you're in the mood for something a bit more relaxing, you can instead opt for Twilight Princess's fishing demo. At a soothing, picturesque fishing spot where cherry blossoms line the shores, ducks meander about, and the sun rises and falls with the passing of time, fisherwoman Hena instructs Link in the ways of two types of angling: shore-based bobber fishing, and lure fishing from a canoe. No matter which option you choose, the fishing demo really lets the Wii controller shine. Using the remote, you'll raise your arm and fling it forward in an authentic casting motion to send out the hook, then make a reeling motion with the nunchuk to pull the line back in. You can also use the buttons on the remote to reel in the line, and you can wave it from side to side to attract the attention of fish. If you're bobber fishing, you simply snap the remote into an upright position to land a fish after it bites, but if you're lure fishing, you'll need to raise the remote to increase the tension of the line while you press the A Button to reel in your catch. If the fish jumps, you must lower the rod quickly or risk losing the fish. It adds up to one of the most fun, realistic virtual fishing experiences ever created. Naturally, you can also fish in the GCN version, but movements of the Control Stick and C Stick replace the motion-based controls.





Link's caught a lunker! The serenity of Hena's fishing hole stands in stark contrast to the industrial-tinged designs of the Goron Mines.



Many aspects of the twilight realm have changed, but it remains just as forboding as before.

Still Steeped in Darkness

As exciting as the latest playable experience is, there are still many, many more mysteries yet to be uncovered. Recent screenshots out of Japan reveal that the twilight realm has undergone a substantial visual change from when it was first shown more than a year ago. Although the realm retains its mystical/technological design underpinnings, it has shifted from a black-and-white color pallet to an oversaturated, light-drenched look that conveys an even greater feeling of unease than its previous monochromatic incarnation did. But what's the story behind the twilight realm and the evil it seems to be producing? What other challenges and environments await Link? And what about all the animals that seem to be following the hero? We'll bring you the latest details as they become available.

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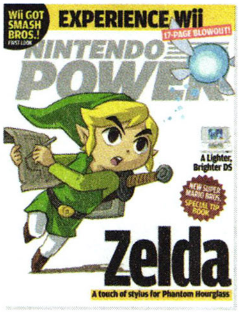

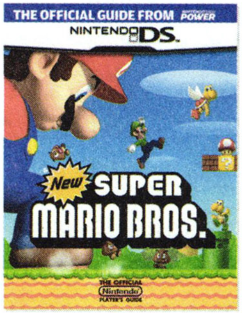

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5. I most likely won't buy Wii.
6. I have no intention of buying Wii.

D. Which of the following Wii games would you most like to play? Please select one answer.
1. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess **2.** Metroid Prime 3: Corruption
3. Red Steel **4.** Sonic Wild Ride
5. Super Mario Galaxy **6.** Super Smash Bros. Brawl
7. WarioWare: Smooth Moves **8.** Wii Sports
9. None of the above

E. Which of the Wii features listed below interests you most? Please choose one answer only.
1. Motion-sensitive Wii controllers
2. Wi-Fi capabilities of Wii
3. Access to classic games via Wii's Virtual Console
4. Access to special games and content via Wii's Virtual Console
5. Wii's DVD compatibility
6. Wii's backward compatibility with GCN
7. None of the above

F. Which of the following Wii control features or functions is of the greatest interest to you? Please select one answer.
1. Motion-sensitivity **2.** Speaker embedded in the Remote Controller
3. Connectable Nunchuk controller **4.** Wireless functionality
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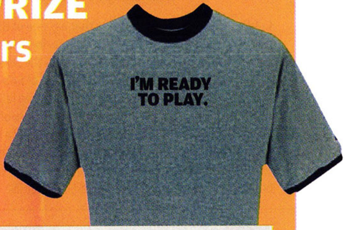

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THE TOP 25 Wii WANT

After months of Wii secrecy, the surprise revelation of dozens of games in worldwide development, many playable at E3, gave the NP staff serious system shock. So we got a grip by hashing out the top 25 titles coming to Wii!

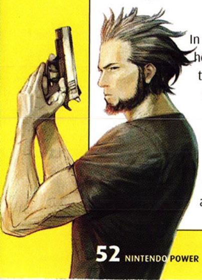
#25 Medal of Honor: Airborne

>*Our list begins with a series known for its strong starts.*

Credit *Saving Private Ryan*, a film that has one of the most explosively dramatic openings of all time, for inspiring the Medal of Honor developers to always start the series' games with a really big bang. The next installment of EA's Steven Spielberg-blessed FPS series begins with a free fall over enemy territory during which you, Private Boyd Travers of the 82nd Airborne Division, determine how you'll approach the enemy forces. The Wii version of the title was just a blip on the radar at E3, but the promise of an exciting start and of Wii-controlled bomb-dismantling sequences landed it on our list. —**George S.**

#24 Disaster: Day of Crisis

>*Nintendo has a new series set for Wii. Pikmin this ain't.*

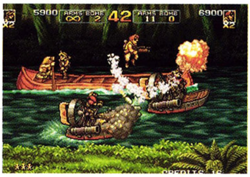


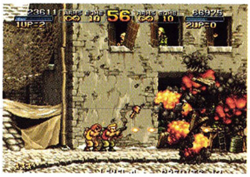
In addition to Mario and other known quantities headed Wii's way, Nintendo pledged new properties for the upcoming console, such as Disaster, a survival-action game that pits rescue task force agent Ray and your best Wii controller skills against tidal waves, volcanic explosions, and toppling high-rises. We would have loved to see some demo action at E3, but we'll have to make do with drooling up tsunamis as we await more details. —**Steven G.**

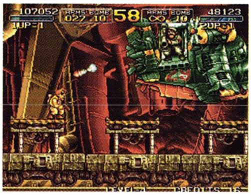
#23 Metal Slug Anthology

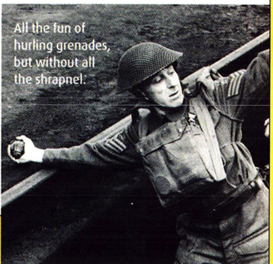
>*Old school meets new tech in a side-scrolling shooter revival.*

Wii's Virtual Console isn't the only way to re-experience the classics. SNK Playmore is delivering a decade's worth of Metal Slug games—that's Metal Slugs 1 through 5, along with Metal Slug X—in one package of intense 2-D run-and-gun thrills. The developers are still experimenting with how to implement Wii functionality; one possibility is that you'll be able to toss grenades by making a throwing motion with the Wii controller. —**Chris H.**



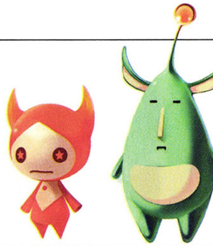




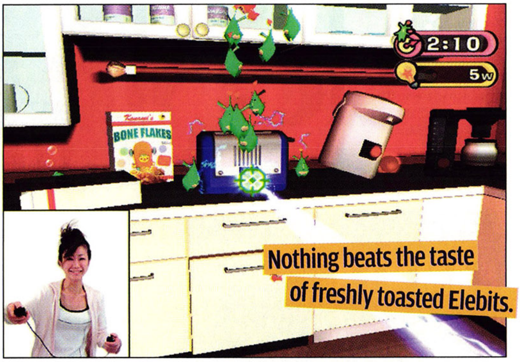

All the fun of hurling grenades, but without all the shrapnel.

#22 Elebits

Konami's cute, curious critters have got the power.

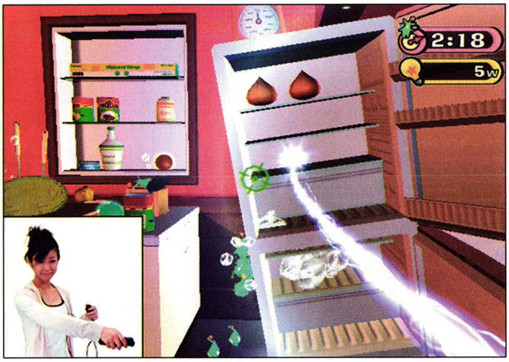


Okay, so just what the heck are Elebits? Nope, they have nothing to do with elephants—they're cute little Pikmin-esque creatures that provide energy to the human world. (The "ele" in their name is derived from "electricity.") As for the game itself, Elebits is essentially an extremely evolved game of hide-and-seek, which uses a proprietary physics engine and the unique capabilities of the Wii controller to put players into a highly interactive world. Basically, if you can see it, you can mess with it. It's as simple as pointing with the Wii remote and pressing a button to send out an electric beam that enables you to push, pull, throw, turn, open, or otherwise manipulate objects in an attempt to find and catch hiding Elebits. As you empty out boxes, upend tables, and lift cars—in the E3 demo you could even hurl houses—you'll also discover power-ups that enhance your Elebit-catching power, such as stun bombs and a lock-on multishot for snagging several Elebits at once. Not only was interacting with the game world fun, but trying to achieve a new high score within the demo's three-minute time limit kept players coming back for more. Konami promises many types of missions in the final game—hopefully they'll be just as addictive. —**Chris H.**

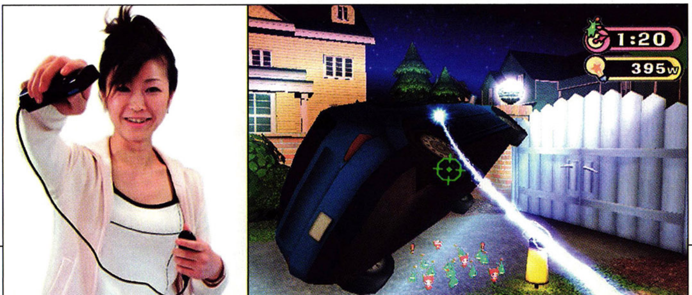


Nothing beats the taste of freshly toasted Elebits.

Elebits can hide anywhere, even in the toaster. You'll want to interact with every appliance you come across to force the Elebits out into the open.



After you grab onto an object with your beam, you can manipulate the object by moving the controller. When things start shaking, you never know what's going to fall out.



#21 Call of Duty

Up for one more tour? Duty calls.

Though details are pretty much nonexistent at this point, Activision has announced that the latest iteration of its award-winning World War II first-person shooter will be headed to Wii this fall. Based on the series' stellar track record and the potential of the Wii controller when it comes to the FPS genre, we're willing to put Call of Duty 3 on our list sight unseen. Hopefully developer Treyarch won't let us down. —**Steve T.**

#20 Harvest Moon

Close your eyes and you can almost smell the cow manure.

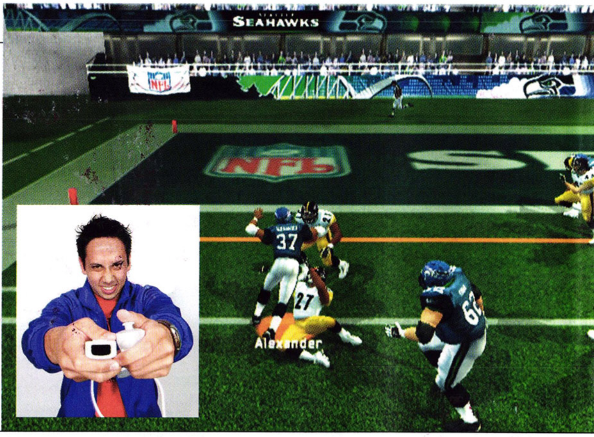
The newest addition to our favorite farming sim popped up on Nintendo's E3 game list, but it was a no-show at the event and we haven't heard anything from Natsume. With all the manual labor it takes to run a farm, the Wii controller seems to fit like our Sunday-best overalls. Actions like digging, tilling, and fishing sound like no-brainers—we're holding out to see turkey-bowling and cow-tipping mingames. —**Chris S.**

We promise the Wii will be an udder-ly new experience.

#19 Madden NFL 07

> *Ditch the armchair and put on pads!*

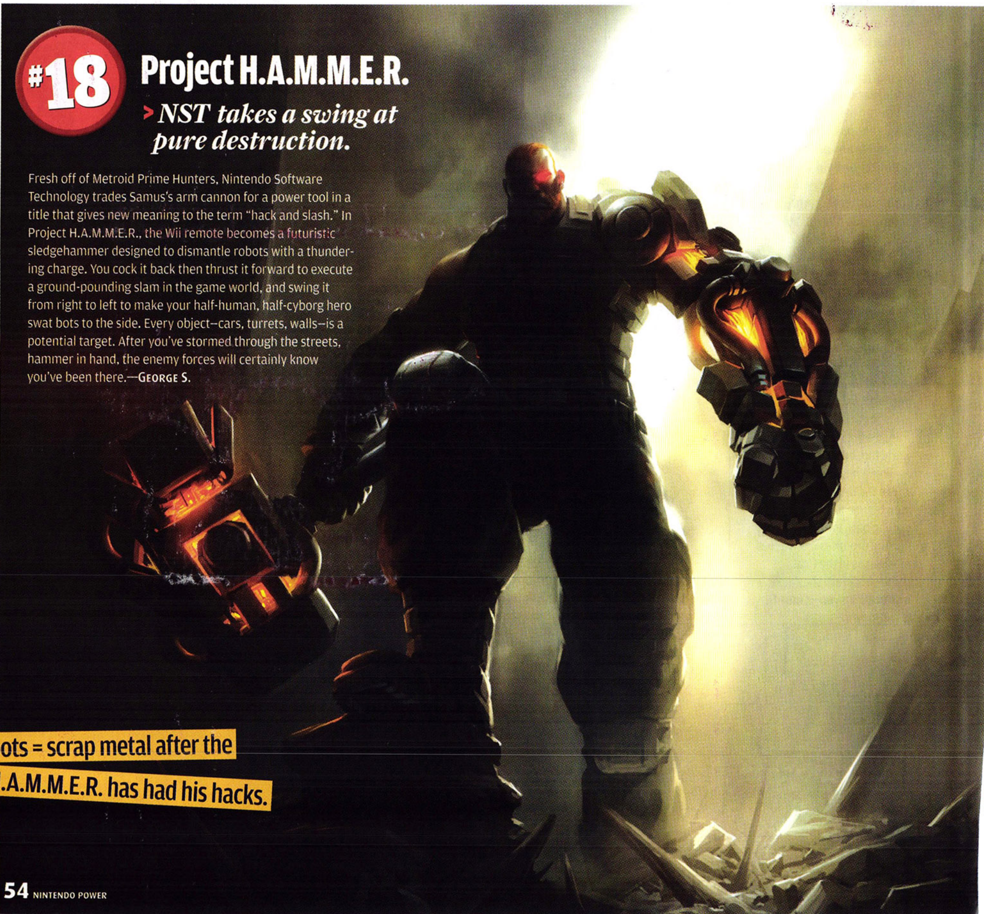
I'd heard about overhead passing with the remote, jukes and stiff-arms with the nunchuk, but what I didn't expect was how intuitive it would be to flick a pass or boot a field goal. Following the E3 demo's simple tutorials, I plunged into a scrimmage between the Steelers and the Seahawks. Hiking and passing the ball was a snap (pun intended), but running was more of a chore. Although the experience was single-player and limited, it was also engaging and very realistic. Jason Armenise, the game's associate producer, told me that the development team had to start from scratch to create the intuitive controls, adding, "There are 150 million football fans and only 7 million play Madden. Madden on Wii is for the other 143 million." —**Scott P.**



#18 Project H.A.M.M.E.R.

> *NST takes a swing at pure destruction.*

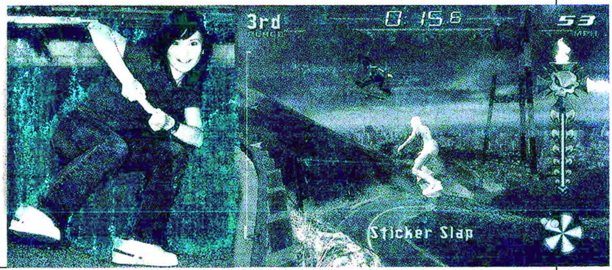
Fresh off of Metroid Prime Hunters, Nintendo Software Technology trades Samus's arm cannon for a power tool in a title that gives new meaning to the term "hack and slash." In Project H.A.M.M.E.R., the Wii remote becomes a futuristic sledgehammer designed to dismantle robots with a thundering charge. You cock it back then thrust it forward to execute a ground-pounding slam in the game world, and swing it from right to left to make your half-human, half-cyborg hero swat bots to the side. Every object—cars, turrets, walls—is a potential target. After you've stormed through the streets, hammer in hand, the enemy forces will certainly know you've been there.—**George S.**



Robots = scrap metal after the H.A.M.M.E.R. has had his hacks.

#17 Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam

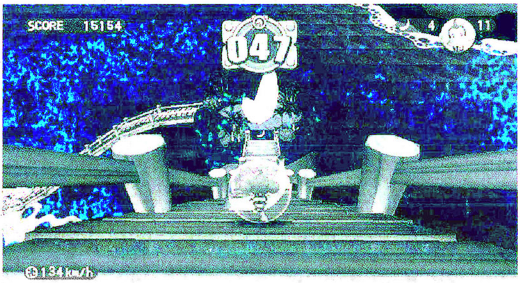
Huck, huck, boom. Tony takes the hill.



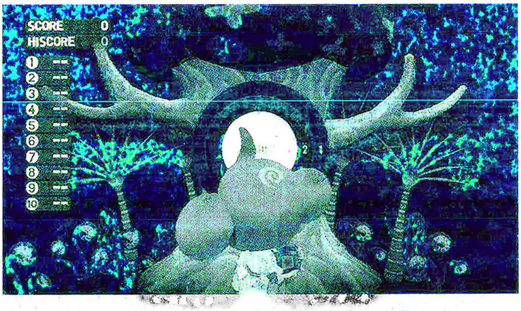
Gravity always plays a big part in Tony Hawk titles, but in Downhill Jam, it means everything. As the Hawk and eight new extreme boarders blast down the world's most dangerous hills, letting physics do its work, you use tilt control via the Wii remote to keep your character from face-planting. Turning the trick-and-tumble franchise into a racer is a bold move, but what put the game on our list is the controller-as-skateboard mechanics that place you at the center of the action. The focus is on superfast skating, but grinds and big air still matter. Tricks build boost power, and with a thrust of the controller, boost power translates into screen-blurring speed. —**George S.**

#16 Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz

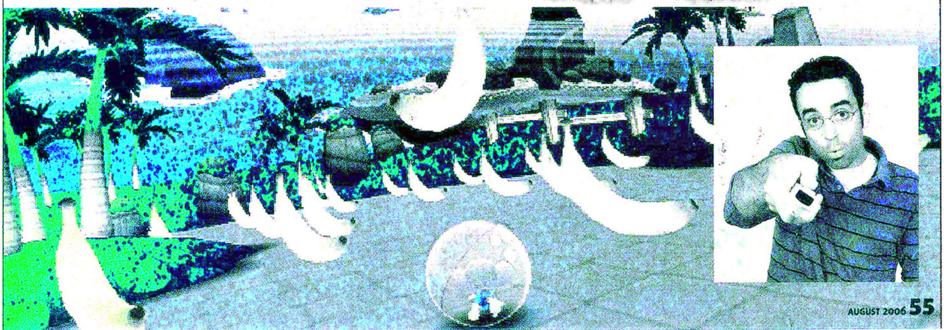
It is quite possibly the world's perfect food, after all.



When we first heard about the Wii remote, Super Monkey Ball was one of the games that immediately came to mind as a perfect fit for the new controller. Sure enough, it works like a dream. You simply tilt the controller to tip the stage and get your monkey (sans pants, of course) moving in the desired direction. The core gameplay hasn't changed much from previous games, but the new control scheme helps it feel fresh. "The Wii controller obviously gives you a more direct connection to what you're trying to do," says Banana Blitz producer Toshihiro Nagoshi. "It offers an entirely new sort of experience. It even surprised me; it was a lot more fun than I thought it would be." Nagoshi and his team at Sega also intend to take full advantage of the controller when it comes to minigames. "As we experimented with various approaches, that led to new types of gameplay that we hadn't thought of before. We'd create a minigame, then once we tried it out, we'd come up with even more new ideas." When asked how many minigames we can expect in the final product, Nagoshi responded simply, "More than enough." Sounds good to us. —**Steve T.**



It's all about the bananas.



#15 Wii Sports

>Nintendo boils sports down to pure-fun factor.

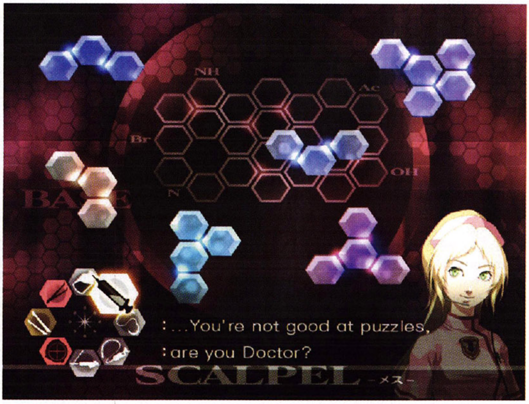
Madden is going for more-intuitive control on Wii, but Nintendo is taking sports back to basics with Wii Sports. Way back—before video games themselves, before the Maddens, Tigers, and Top Spins, back in the days when people needed baseball bats, tennis rackets, and golf clubs to play. With Wii Sports, however, you won't need a rec room crammed with sports stuff; you'll need only the Wii remote. The idea's designed, according to Nintendo prez Satoru Iwata, to appeal to the broadest possible group of players. How's this experiment paying off? Our Wii Sports feature on page 38 gets down to the nitty-gritty. —**Steven G.**

Bat and ball, yes. Broken windows, no. Nintendo makes sports stress-free.

#14 Trauma Center: Second Opinion

>Dr. Stiles still has the healing touch.

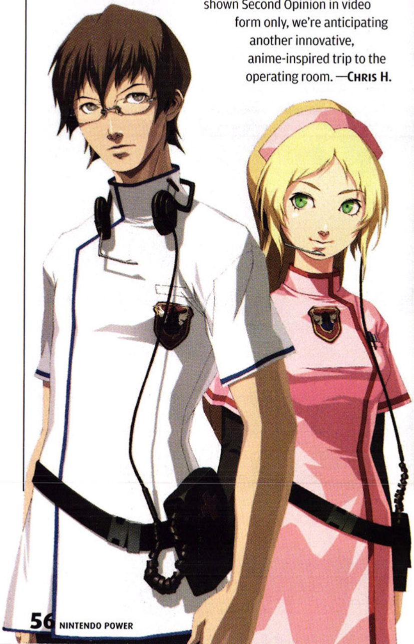
The original Trauma Center was one of the first games on DS to completely embrace an all-new type of hardware-specific gameplay—one that proved saving lives could be just as exhilarating as taking them. We expect similar thrills from the sequel, which again places you in the scrubs of Dr. Derek Stiles, but this time the Wii controller provides the tools for cutting, suturing, bandaging, injecting—even resuscitating by using the controller as a defibrillator paddle. Although Atlus has shown Second Opinion in video form only, we're anticipating another innovative, anime-inspired trip to the operating room. —**Chris H.**

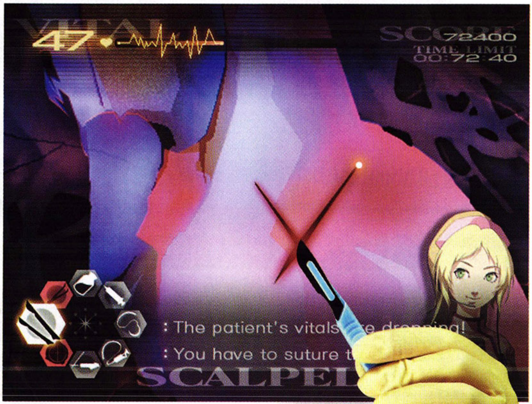


: ...You're not good at puzzles,

: are you Doctor?

SCALPEL -メス-





: The patient's vitals e dropping!

: You have to suture t

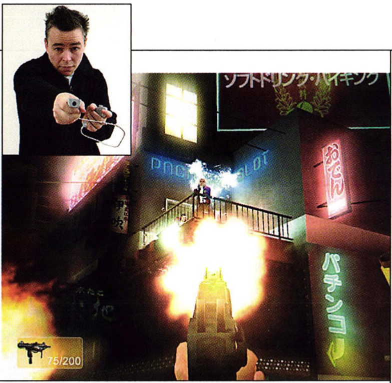
SCALPEL

Scalpel controller attachment not included! (We think.)

#13 Red Steel

> *Ubisoft shows us a bit of Wii's darker side.*

Definitely one of the grittiest titles on our list, Red Steel takes you into Tokyo's underground, where shotgun-toting gangsters cast long shadows under the dirty glow of neon signs. Hands-on time with the game revealed some interesting approaches to the Wii controller—particularly in regard to the sword battles, where flicks of the wrist set your sword to block an oncoming attack. The gun-aiming aspect worked as expected—aiming is faster and more accurate than with a conventional controller. —**Chris S.**



#11 Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors

> *Slimes, golems, and other beasts beware.*

This first-person spin on Dragon Quest lore lets you brandish the Wii controller as a sword. Which is more exciting: the fact that the game is being developed by the core DQ staff, or the fact that Square Enix announced it as a launch title? —**Chris H.**

#12 Excite Truck

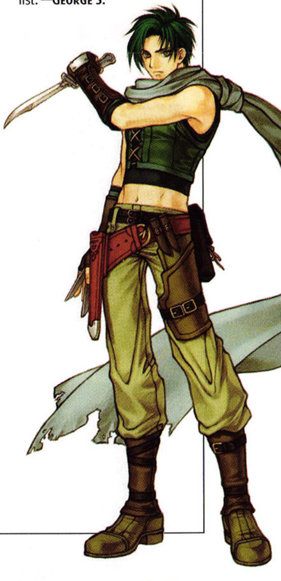
> *ET blasts off, and leaves a safe landing up to you.*

Nintendo's Excitebike thrilled NES and N64 players with huge jumps and a speed advantage for square landings. Excite Truck takes that fly-and-finish concept into the Wii generation. Holding the Wii remote as you would a classic controller, you tilt the device left and right to make your monster truck turn, and you twist the controller forward and back to adjust your vehicle's pitch in midair. If all four wheels hit the dirt at the same time, you'll earn exhaust-pipe-blazing boost speed to rocket past the competition. The game is pick-up-and-play to the extreme. Anyone who grabs the remote will be tearing up the track (and morphing it with power-ups) in seconds. —**George S.**

#10 Fire Emblem

> *Sight unseen, FE cracks our Top 10.*

The GBA Fire Emblem games are self-contained, but the Wii title is set in the same land as the GCN's Path of Radiance, and features some of the same characters, such as the thief Sothe. Little is known about the story, but we've learned that it takes place shortly after PoR and may tie up loose ends. A brilliant, but short, E3 video was enough to place it high on our list. —**George S.**



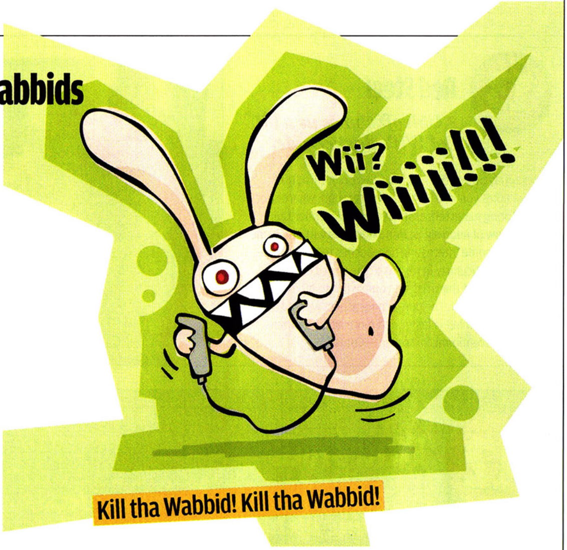
#9 Rayman: Raving Rabbids

>*Cute, cuddly, and ready to eat you.*

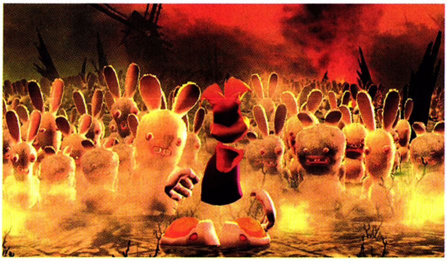
Last month, we speculated that Rayman producer Michel Ancel might be going a little bit crazy; after watching the hilarious E3 trailers in Ubisoft's booth about his upcoming Wii platformer, we can, thankfully, report that it's all true. After creating relatively solemn works like Beyond Good & Evil and King Kong, it's obvious Ancel's studio is looking forward to churning out some full-blown belly laughs.

Raving Rabbids looks to be absolutely bonkers—possessed bunnies have taken over the night, threatening to destroy the world, and it's up to the limbless hero to take care of the infestation. Fortunately, Rayman knows their one weakness—dancing. By putting on various disguises and rocking out to different genres of tunes, Rayman can assuage the creatures' violent tendencies.

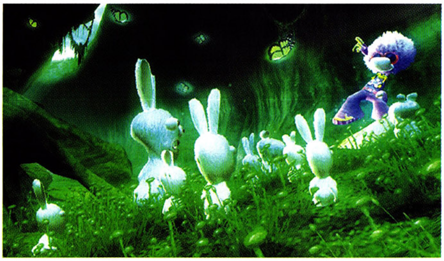
Ancel has a lot of ideas for how to wield the Wii controller; you'll use it to get your dance on, but he's also hinted that you'll be able to attack with kung-fu-style moves. Rayman will ride a variety of animals during his quest, as well—you can expect the control methods to match his various steeds. —**Chris S.**



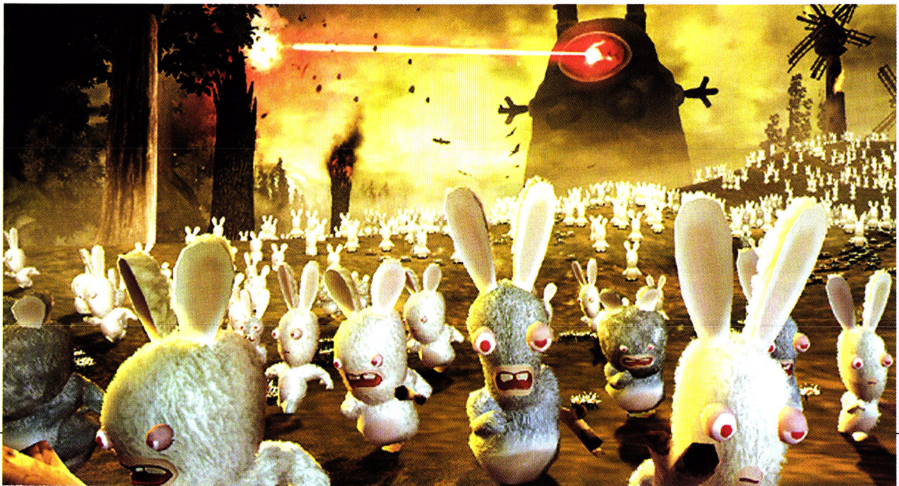
Kill tha Wabbid! Kill tha Wabbid!



Forgive us, but with no arms and legs, Rayman doesn't seem like that meaty of a target. We suggest the Rabbids look for a target of Wario-like proportions.



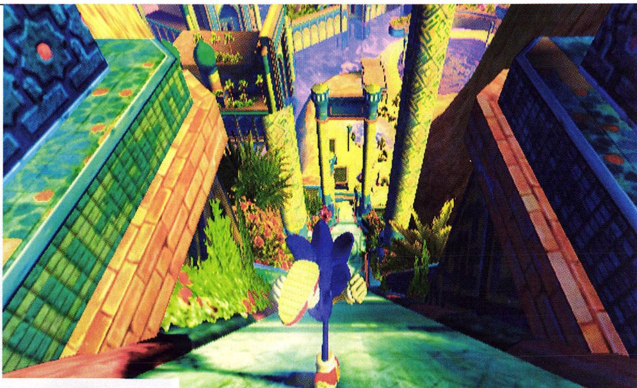
We haven't seen this much purple since Prince came to town; are the bunnies mesmerized by the dancing or by that awesome costume?

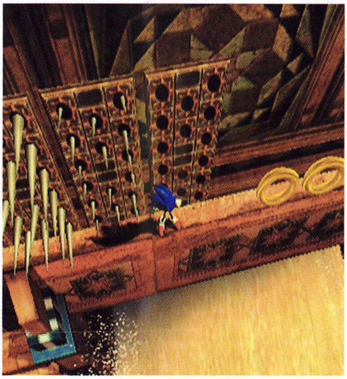


#8 Sonic Wild Fire

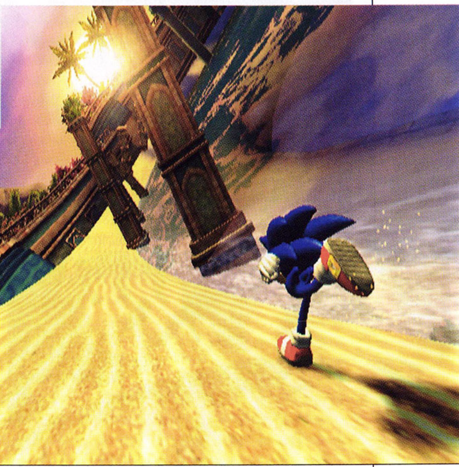
> *A return to form for the blue blur.*

Sonic's Wii-exclusive adventure has us excited because it seems to recapture the spirit of the hedgehog's 16-bit heyday. Even though the camera is positioned behind Sonic, the game feels a lot like an old-school side-scroller. The world's fastest insectivore runs on a linear path, and you simply tilt the controller (while holding it horizontally) to move him from side to side, flick it to have him execute a homing attack, and press a button to make him jump. That's pretty much it. Just like the old Genesis games, it's all about high-speed thrills and quick reflexes (with branching routes and hidden power-ups giving the game subtle depth). When asked about the inspiration for Wild Fire's *Arabian Nights* theme, director Yojiro Ogawa responded, "The core concept was basically to revolutionize Sonic. We wanted to return to his roots, yet try something entirely new. So I wanted to make sure that he had a new environment to play in. Since *Arabian Nights* has 1,001 stories, it allows for a variety of different environments and a variety of things for Sonic to do." —**Steve T.**





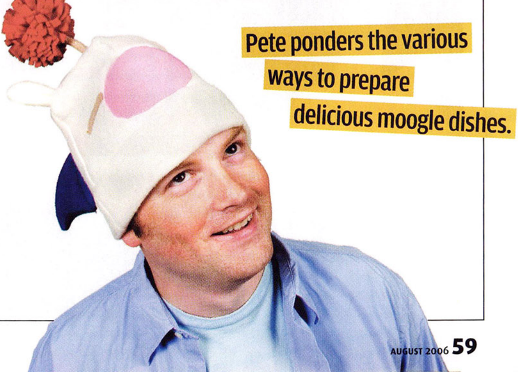
Occasionally the camera will swing around to give you a better view of certain obstacles. If you ask us, that's a better way to inject a bit of variety than fishing with a morbidly obese cat.



#7 Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers

> *Another Experimental fantasy from Square Enix.*

The original Crystal Chronicles for the GameCube had immense potential as a multiplayer quest, but it was held back by clunky (and expensive) GBA connectivity. Free from those binds, we have high hopes for The Crystal Bearers. The brief trailer shown at E3 was visually striking, with a look reminiscent of its predecessor. Gameplay details remain scant, but the game's director, Toshiyuki Itahana, promises a fusion of groundbreaking control and RPG tradition. —**Steve T.**



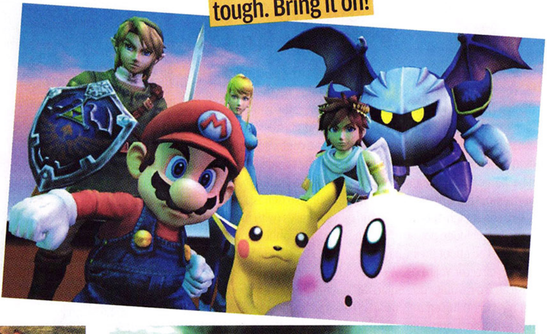
Pete ponders the various ways to prepare delicious moogle dishes.

#6

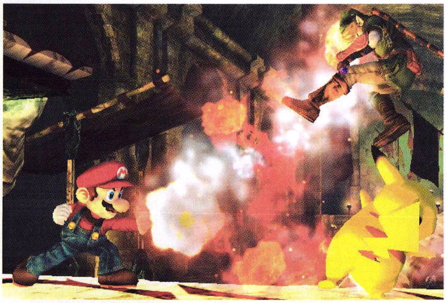
Super Smash Bros. Brawl

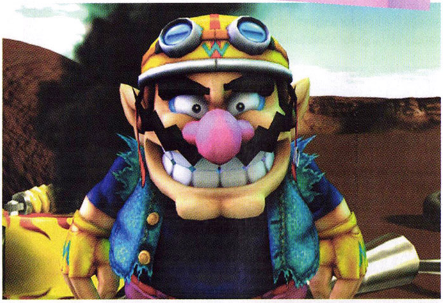
>*Mario, meet your new friends.*

Nothing got the wheels of speculation spinning faster during E3 than when Nintendo unveiled some of the new Smash Bros. Brawl characters. After all, there's been nonstop rumormongering on Internet forums about the *next* batch of characters ever since Melee launched. Wario was a pretty safe bet to be in the gorgeous third installment of the iconic fighting game, and old-schoolers have been hoping for Kid Icarus's Pit since the beginning. It'll be fun to have Kirby square off vs. Meta Knight, and pit Metroid's protagonist against her alter ego, Zero-Suit Samus, but the character everyone's talking about is Solid Snake. Metal Gear Solid's grizzled hero is the first non-Nintendo figure to grace the series. Does this mean we'll get to see more players like him? We'll keep our fingers crossed. —**Chris S.**

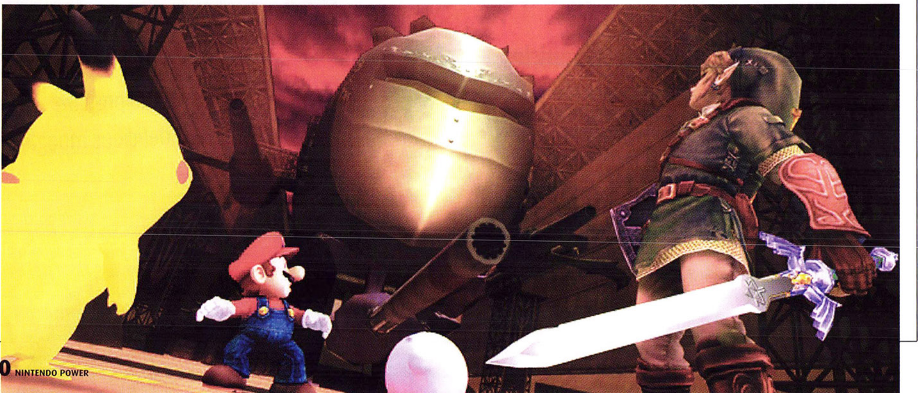


You guys don't look so tough. Bring it on!





Along with all the new characters, Super Smash Bros. Brawl features updated looks for core characters like Link, Mario, and Pikachu.



#5 WarioWare: Smooth Moves

>His master plan: to crash your party.

When Nintendo's WarioWare streaks onto Wii, it'll have the series' surreal style and quicksilver microgames, and like every WW since its GBA debut, Smooth Moves will translate new technology into hyperkinetic new ideas. According to series producer Goro Abe, that means using the Wii remote to draw the player into a world of motion that would make even mimes work overtime. Running with that idea makes Smooth Moves a very different animal than Mega Party Game$, WW's previous console romp, says the producer. That title had multiple players watching the game while competing. Smooth Moves puts one remote-holding player in the hot seat (though the nunchuk might be used for 2P interaction), while others have just as much fun watching the player as the game itself. Future WarioWare concepts on Wii might focus on multiplayer competition using multiple Wii controllers, or even new concepts via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, says Abe. But this one's all party animal, all the time. —Steven G.

The Big Kahuna

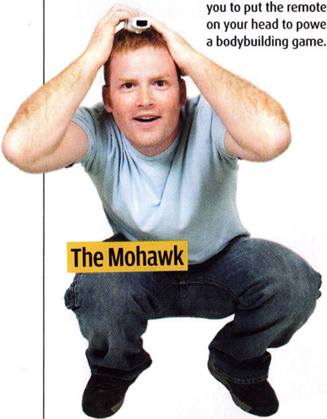
You'll bust a move, or a hip, in a hula hoop game fueled by your gyrations.

Smooth Moves makes you hold the remote in many different styles: clenching it to pump iron, for instance.

The Dumbbell

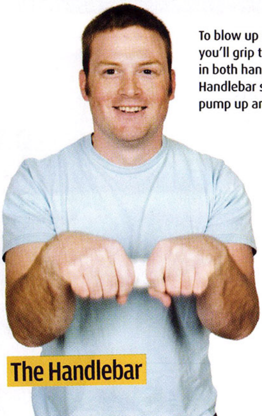
To balance a broom in your palm, you'll use what WarioWare: Smooth Moves calls the Waiter style.

The Waiter



The Mohawk style asks you to put the remote on your head to power a bodybuilding game.

The Mohawk



To blow up a balloon, you'll grip the remote in both hands in the Handlebar style, then pump up and down.

The Handlebar

The Sketch Artist

To put dentures into a woman's mouth, you'll move the remote precisely to position them, then literally shove 'em in.

#4 Resident Evil

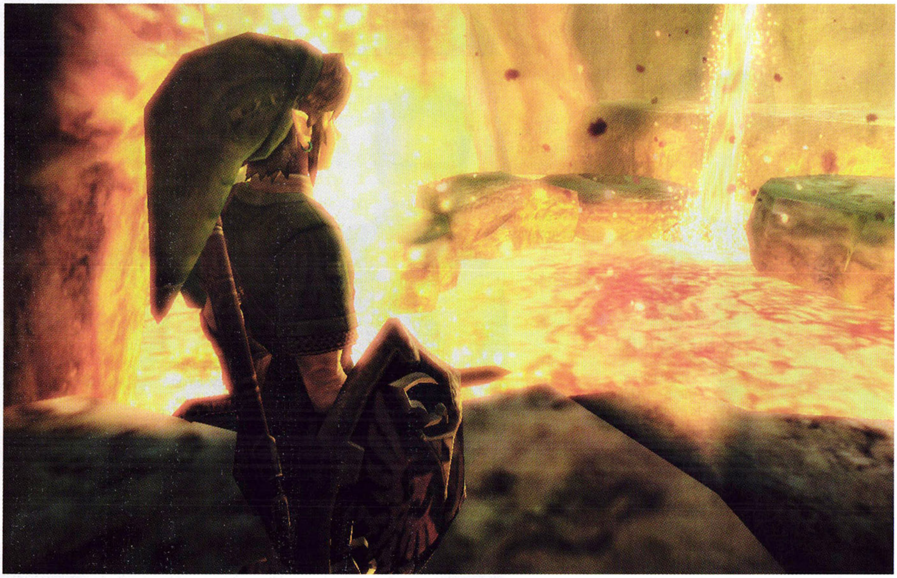
> We just want to be Master of Controlling.

We'll admit it—we know absolutely nothing about the Resident Evil Wii game that was announced, so putting it at #4 on our list might seem a little aggressive. We're obviously pretty giddy about getting to use the Wii remote to control a game in one of our favorite series. If Resident Evil stays on the path paved by RE4, the remote could be perfect for frenzied, FPS-style zombie-blastin'. And it's hard for us to imagine a better way to control the original-style Resident Evil games. Now if only they'd make a chainsaw controller attachment. . . . —**Chris S.**

#3 The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess

> Three E3s of Zelda bombshells later . . .

What a long, strange trip it's been for Link. And for us all, as we've counted the days until Twilight Princess would see the light of day. Two years ago, Zelda fans were ecstatic about the revelation that Link would man up in a game steeped in equal parts realism and fantasy; last year, the hero's wolf form emerged, along with four-legged Link's passenger Midna and an eerie Twilight Princess storyline. This year, we've learned that a Wii version of the game will give us a wide-screen view—all the better to see more targets and shoot them with Link's remote-controlled bow. Wii revelations went on and on at E3 '06, including whirling the nunchuk to execute the spin attack and hearing arrows fly from your remote-clutching fist via an embedded speaker. But that's not all we've learned. Turn to page 44 for more. —**Steven G.**



#2 Metroid Prime 3: Corruption

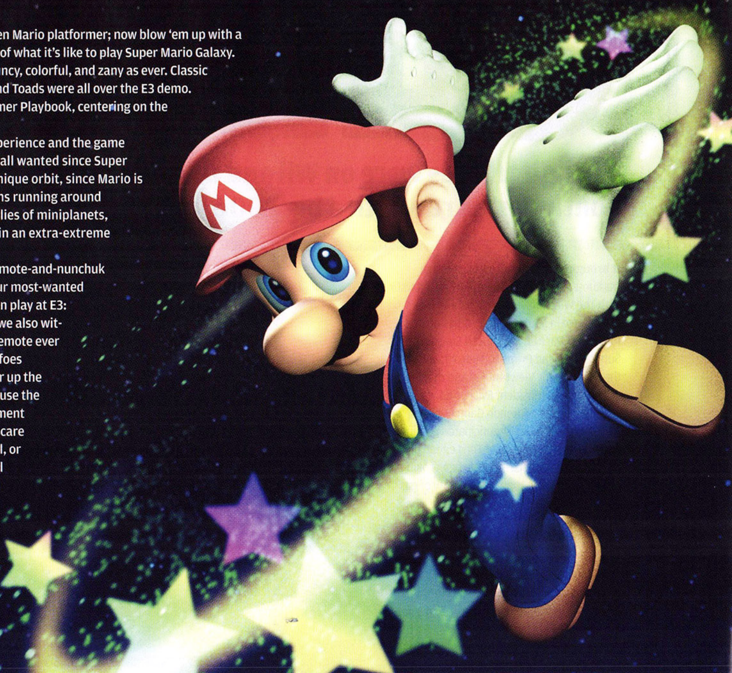
> Could the final chapter of the Prime trilogy be the best yet?

One of the ways Nintendo showcased the Wii controller during its introduction to the press last year was with a retrofitted version of Metroid Prime 2. Though I was skeptical of the controller at first, using it to play MP2 made a believer out of me. And early hands-on time with Metroid Prime 3 has only bolstered my faith. If they can work out a few early kinks, Retro will revolutionize the way we play first-person shooters on consoles. For more on Corruption, check out our Q&A with the developers on page 34. —**Steve T.**

Gaming's first lady will be ready for launch.

#1 Super Mario Galaxy

> *Galaxy goes where no Mario has gone before.*

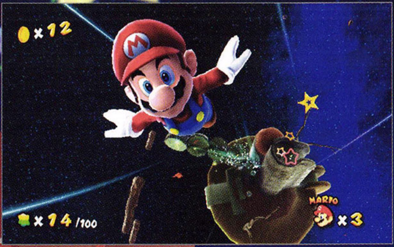


Take all of your basic assumptions about a next-gen Mario platformer; now blow 'em up with a big, big bang. You'll end up with a clearer concept of what it's like to play Super Mario Galaxy. It feels like a Mario platformer should—just as bouncy, colorful, and zany as ever. Classic foes and friends abound: Goombas, Bullet Bills, and Toads were all over the E3 demo. And the plot is taken right from the Mario Platformer Playbook, centering on the rescue of an abducted Princess Peach.

But Super Mario Galaxy advances the play experience and the game design so much that it's the quantum leap we've all wanted since Super Mario 64. The setting alone would put it into a unique orbit, since Mario is heading into space in search of Peach. That means running around whimsical asteroids, dashing along the underbellies of miniplanets, and soaring from one heavenly body to the next in an extra-extreme form of platforming.

But it's the way Super Mario Galaxy uses Wii remote-and-nunchuk control that propels the game to the very top of our most-wanted Wii games list. We saw many classic Mario moves in play at E3: running, jumping, triple-jumping and others. But we also witnessed unmistakably new moves. You'll spin the remote ever so slightly to send Mario into a whirl, used to slap foes around, shake down coins from bushes, and power up the star cannons that blast him into space. You'll also use the remote as a pointer to poke and prod the environment while Mario's on the run, whether to ring bells to scare up secrets, daze foes with the glowing pointer trail, or blast away with shooting-gallery glee to nab astral power-ups. The remote will also let you latch onto sticky stuff in the world, pull it back as if it's in your hand, then let go, all to fire Mario as if from a slingshot. Miyamoto has also commented that at least two players will be able to play the game at the same time, one person controlling Mario while others use remotes to help (or hinder) the hero.

There's one more dazzling detail. Galaxy is being developed by Nintendo's Tokyo team, which brought the brilliantly bizarre world and bosses of Donkey Kong Jungle Beat to life. All combined, Mario's Wii trek adds up to something much larger than we ever dreamed. — **Steven G.**



Can anyone come between you and Mario? In 2P play, that's the whole idea.

CUBISM

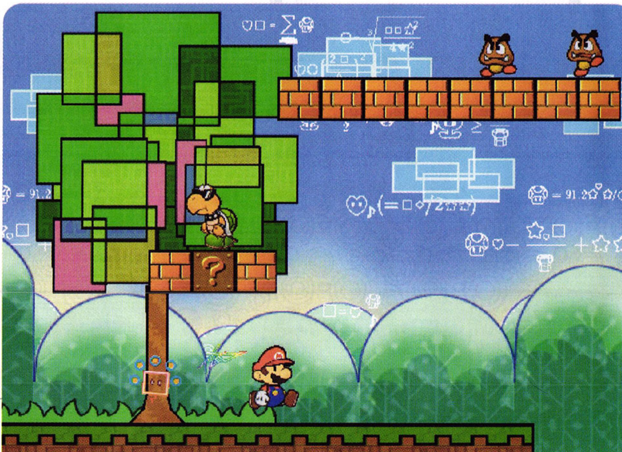
Though all eyes were on Wii and DS at E3, the Nintendo GameCube continues its run with a big 2006 lineup.

By George Sinfield

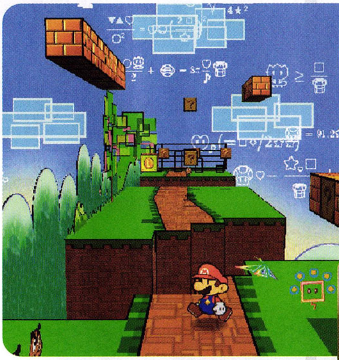
It brought us Animal Crossing, Eternal Darkness, Pikmin, and Killer 7. It caused a stir with The Wind Waker's art style and Link's dominance in Soul Calibur II. It has hosted four Mario Parties, introduced Sunshine to Super Mario and Prime to Metroid, and was the first stop for Viewtiful Joe and the they're-not-zombies of Resident Evil 4. And, in the coming months, Nintendo GameCube will be part of one of the most anticipated gaming events ever: the release of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. We've been rolling with Wii lately, but there's still plenty of gas left in the GCN's tank, and since Wii will be backward-compatible, the GCN library will live on in the new generation. Following are some of the console's highlights for the summer and fall, including a surprisingly multidimensional adventure for Paper Mario, a fighting follow-up for the Naruto crew, and a new beginning for Spyro the Dragon.

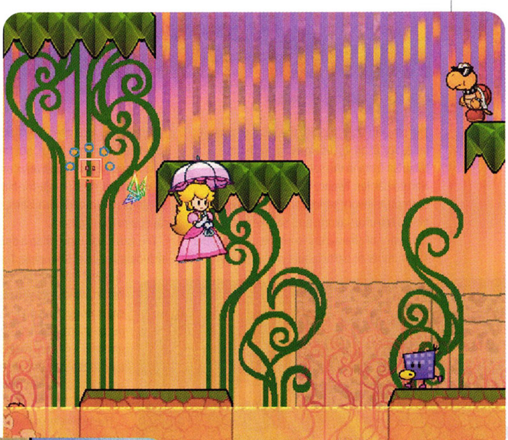
Super Paper Mario

Known for its inventive graphics, RPG elements, and humorous tone, the Paper Mario series is taking a 90-degree turn into the third dimension and an action-heavy move into the platforming realm. At first glance, the world of Super Paper Mario looks like the traditional 2-D Super Mario Bros. environments, only with trees made of multicolored overlapping squares, and clouds as faint chalk outlines in geometric shapes. The flat-as-a-mat interpretation of our favorite plumber runs along a 2-D plane, stomping Koopas and Goombas, and breaking bricks with joyful old-school fervor. That is, until an R-Button-triggered camera rotation exposes the world as a solid object with unseen depth; a world where if you can't get past a wall of bricks, you rotate the view to discover that the obstacle is but a brick thick; where Mushroom Kingdom critters, when rotated,

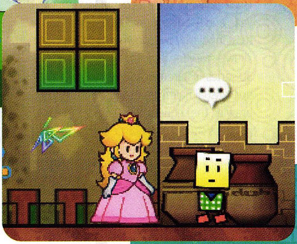


become pixel-wide nonentities. Camera rotation even helps you cross a gap when the rolling hills that look like a distant backdrop in the 2-D view turn into a new path for the plumber in 3-D. It works the other way, too. A staggered jumble of floating blocks in the 3-D world transforms into an inviting stairway when you look at it from a flat perspective.





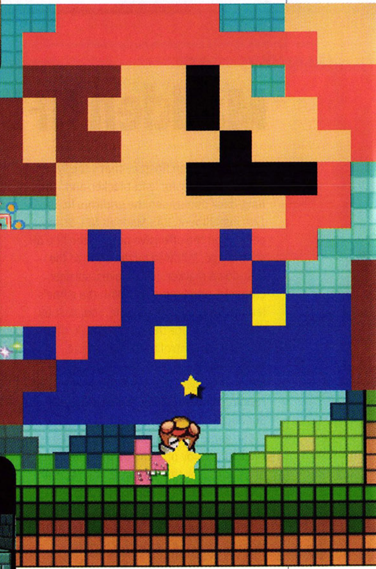
With the recent Super Princess Peach DS release and Peach's participation in Paper Mario, the princess is moving to the forefront.



Another interesting turn is the inclusion of Peach and Bowser as playable characters. While Mario's R-Button power lets him rotate his world view, Peach's R-triggered parasol move lets her float over gaps and packs of enemies. Bowser breathes fire, letting him blaze a path to his goal. The members of the trio also make use of a Fairy follower who grabs enemies, activates a superpowerful stomp attack, and transforms into a foe-smashing hammer or an explosive device.

Additional help comes from power-ups and items. The power-ups include a mushroom that refills your character's health, flowers that speed up or slow down your character's moves, and a group of mini Marios, Bowsers, or Peaches that mimic the lead character's actions. A Starman turns your fighter into a giant version of his or her 8-bit self to lord over the landscape. Though you can stomp enemies as you would in classic Super Mario Bros. titles, you can also attack them with button-mashing-triggered items in a way that recalls the turn-based battles of previous Paper Mario games. The Fire Burst item builds power as you press the A Button repeatedly. The Ice Storm increases in strength as you move the Control Stick left and right.

Enemies are a mixed bag, too. Some come from previous titles, but others are new, such as sketchy squares with legs, and a dragon that roars through the scene in both 2-D and 3-D perspectives. More details will become available as the game's fall launch approaches.



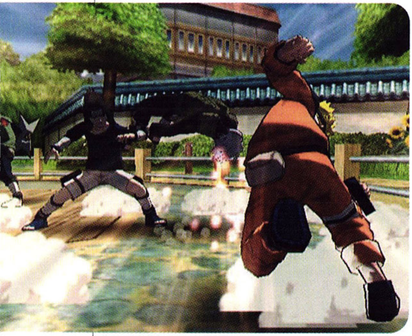
He grew to monster size in New Super Mario Bros. Now Mario goes big with vintage flair in Super Paper Mario.

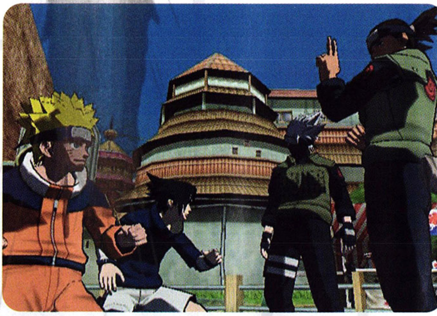
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2

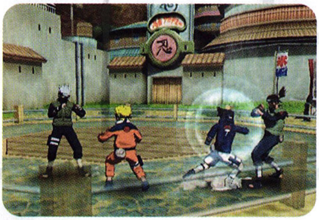
The ninja-in-training with the spirit of a nine-tailed fox exhibits his expertise with the Ninjutsu form in the second GCN-exclusive Naruto battler. Twenty fighters from the Cartoon Network series *Naruto* join classmates Naruto, Sakura, and Sasuke to double the roster of characters from the original title. The number of participants in multiplayer matches also increases: The first title invited two players to have it out, but the sequel offers gaming for four in any configuration of co-op play or every-ninja-for-himself battling. Single-player-mode skirmishes, too, incorporate up to four fighters.

The game has more than a dozen modes, including Training, Shopping, Time Attack, Survival, and the unlockable CPU Demo, which lets you play the part of spectator in a brawl between computer-controlled fighters. That will give you a chance to learn the techniques that are unique to each character and use them in your own bouts.

The television show has gained a large audience since its debut last year, and the new game builds on that popularity by following the show's storyline and staging battles in 30 series-inspired locations. Stepping up in visual flair from the first Naruto brawler, the sequel's cel-shaded graphics should give players a Naruto experience that closely resembles that of the show.







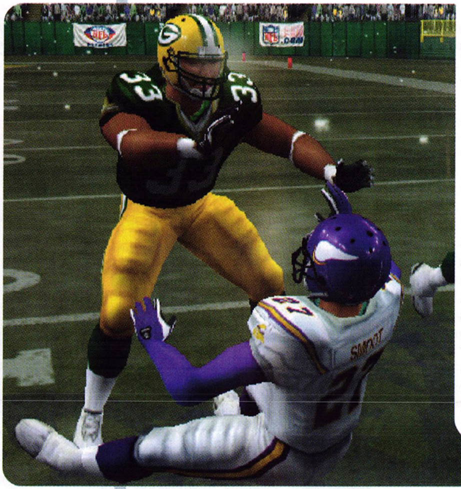
With four fighters at once, Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2 can tell a more-complex story than the original title.

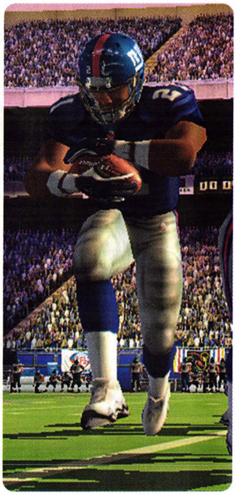
Madden NFL 07

First power, then finesse—that's the formula that a successful lead-blocker-and-running-back duo use on the gridiron. In its 17th installment, EA's Madden NFL series centers on the offensive push at the line of scrimmage, followed by the drive to the first-down marker; it's all jukes, slashes, cutbacks, and high steps. With the game's lead-blocker control scheme, you start by making a hole for the running back, then switch your control to the ball carrier for the breakthrough run. The Highlight Stick (C Stick) lets you to execute player-specific running moves just like the ones you see on Sundays.

The game improves on the other side of the ball, too, by opening up the defensive playbooks. For the first time, you can call run- and pass-stopping plays that are unique to your NFL team.

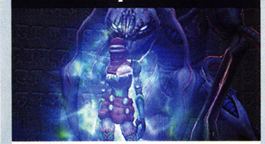
Franchise mode adjustments offer a college-player scouting system and the Franchise Player Roles feature, which lets you monitor the progress of key players from around the league.





Madden NFL 07 gives run proctectors their due and lets you control two athletes in a running play for the first time.

Previously Previewed



Baten Kaitos Origins

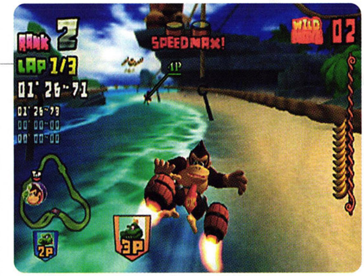
Exclusive to the GCN, the second large-scale RPG in the Baten Kaitos series takes place 20 years before Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean, and explains Alfard's transformation from benign territory to evil empire. The story promises plenty of allegiance-altering twists, and the adventure will be loaded with long battles and side quests. The real-time, card-based fighting system overhauls the original game's battle system for tight-paced and tense conflicts. The game is set for a late-September release. Look for feature-length coverage in a future issue.

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent

If you spend enough time with the wrong element, you'll change; your view of right and wrong will alter. Ubisoft's fourth GCN Splinter Cell title, due in September, examines superspy Sam Fisher's too-close-for-comfort exposure to a terrorist organization, and explores how far he will go to earn and maintain the trust of his underworld contacts. The alliances Fisher forms determine the story's direction. Wherever it goes, the path is sure to bring us combat with near-future weaponry and a story that concerns the fate of the free world.

LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy

The *Star Wars* films unraveled the epic in reverse, backing up for the prequels to cover what happened long before Luke found Leia in the detention cell. But everything is as it should be in the LEGO *Star Wars* universe. The first block party led to the construction of the Death Star. The second one blows it apart, bit by LEGO bit. It also advances the LEGO *Star Wars* franchise by offering new characters (50 of them), a fleet of classic vehicles (the *Millennium Falcon* among them), and the most memorable scenes of the series. (Could anything beat the battle of Hoth with LEGO versions of Imperial walkers?) The game is set to release alongside individual DVDs of the original trilogy's films this fall.

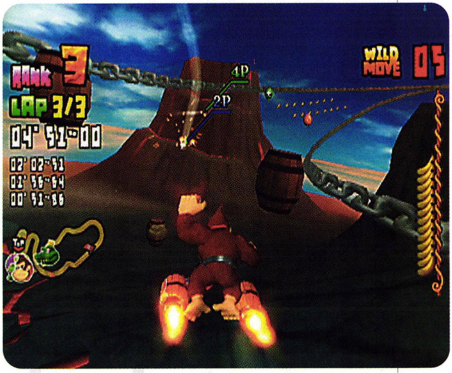


DK Bongo Blast

Using the DK Bongos to create rhythmic energy, Bongo Blast is a Jet Barrel race through Donkey Kong country. Alternating bongo hits bring your jet up to speed. If you favor one drum, your vehicle will bank in that drum's direction, and when you clap, your barrel will blast off. By collecting power-ups hidden in floating balloons, you can earn ammunition to use against your Kremling competitors.

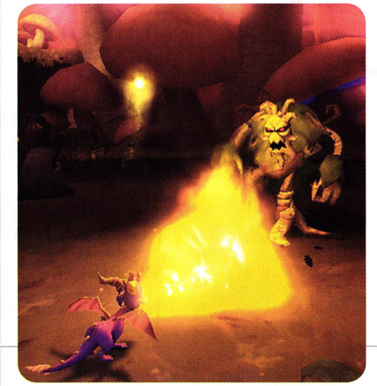
Among the races are a jungle run and a barrel ride over a waterfall, a dangerous drive through the middle of a volcano, and a beach dash that features underwater runs and a side trip on speedy swordfish Enguarde.

Members of the DK family match up with Kremlings in split-screen racing for up to four players. The game is compatible (and nearly as fun) with the standard GCN controller.



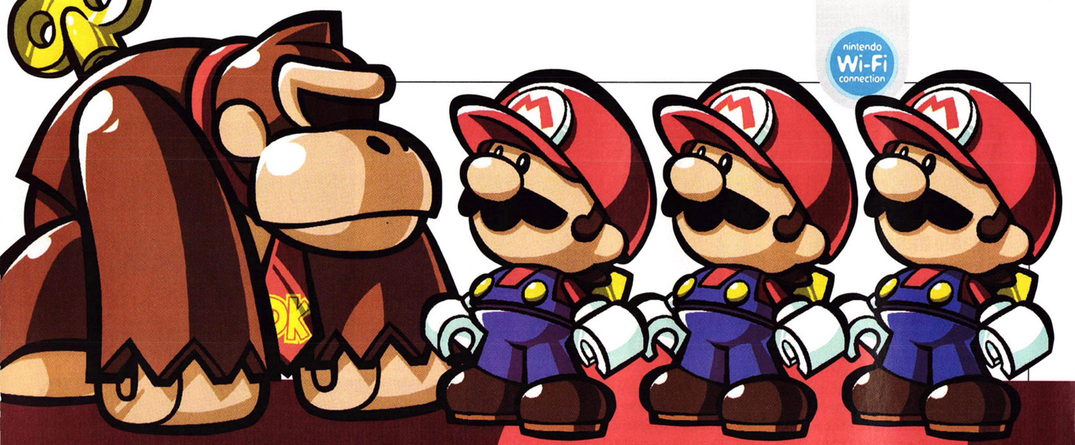
Donkey Kong rockets through familiar surroundings in the rhythm-fueled Bongo Blast.

The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning



EVERYONE 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

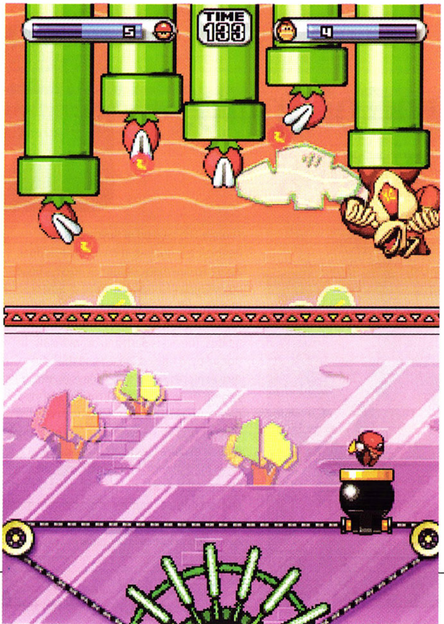
Though The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning is not based on a movie, it does aspire to cinematic quality. Its cast is headed by Elijah Wood as the voice of Spyro, David Spade as Sparx, and Gary Oldman (Sirius Black in the *Harry Potter* films) as Ignitus; the art is dark and dramatically lit (for a Spyro title, at least); and the adventure explores Spyro's early days on the swamp (a Hollywood-style origin story). Gameplay promises a greater focus on battle over previous Spyro titles. As the young dragon explores his roots, he acquires a repertoire of fury attacks and upgradeable elemental breath attacks, and takes on an unprecedented number of incidental enemies and boss monsters. The fighting-and-flying action begins in October.



ALL WOUND UP

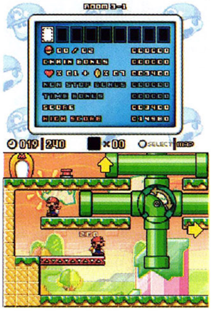
Toys take over your DS in **Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis.** Time to spring into action.

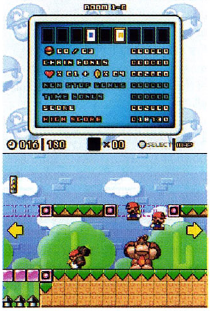
By George Sinfield



March of the Minis, a DS sequel to 2004's GBA puzzler Mario vs. Donkey Kong, cuts out the middle Mario, letting you put the hero's wind-up doppelgangers into motion directly through touch control. You've got to watch them, though. They can really move, and they don't know how to stay out of harm's way. The more toys you guide to the goal, the more ammo you'll have when you confront the big ape for hairy boss battles.

When Mario and Donkey Kong last clashed, it was over DK's zeal for collecting Mini Marios. The monkey made off with a bagful of the little buddies, so the hero scurried after him, acting as Pied Piper to lead the mechanical masses back to his toy box. In the new chapter of the storied rivalry, there are enough Mini Marios to go around, as well as Mini Toads, Mini Peaches, and, yes, even Mini Donkey Kongs. DK is still going ape, though, and this time it's over a girl. When Pauline, the original object of DK's desire, has the choice of cuddling up to a Mario toy or a miniaturized Donkey Kong, she selects the tiny plumber, a decision that may have something to do with that kidnapping incident in the old days. Kong takes the news poorly and—you saw it coming—kidnaps Pauline again. Now it's up to the hero's army of Mini Marios to take over; they must scour Super Mini Mario World and put the monkey in his place. Not all of the minis will make it to their goal, but for each one that hits the spikes, gets burned by a Piranha Plant, or falls prey to a mini Shy Guy, there's another one to take charge. The toys will continue their relentless march until the monkey gets his due.



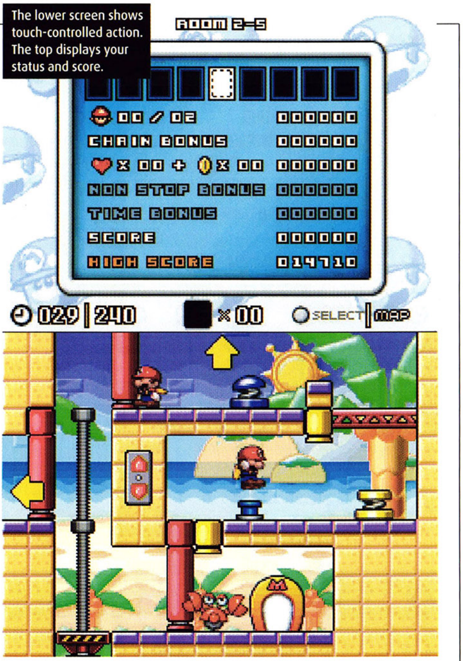


You Guide Me

Mini Marios are all pluck and luck. Unless you help them, they'll go down in flames. Tap a toy to bring it to life, then make it move with a stroke of your stylus. When one Mini Mario runs into another, the little mechs form a single-file line and continue on their way together. You can make a pint-sized plumber hop by hitting it with an upward stroke, sink into a pipe by slashing downward, or stop by giving it a halting tap. The little guys will do as you tell them, even if it means their demise.

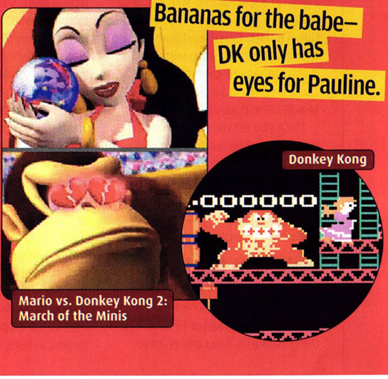
The goal for each of the game's puzzlelike levels (nine to a floor over eight floors) is to get all of the Mini Marios in the area to the exit arch. That requires as much environmental manipulation as toy prodding. Walls and bridges are built of blocks. You can make a structure disappear by tapping it, then have it reappear by touching an outline at its former location. A limited number of blocks are available, so to make one gap-spanning bridge appear, you may have to dissolve a second structure.

Many of the enemies that the Mini Marios encounter are mechanical versions of classic critters, such as the aforementioned Shy Guys (on which Mini Marios can hitch a ride), sideways-sliding crabs on wheels,


The lower screen shows touch-controlled action. The top displays your status and score.

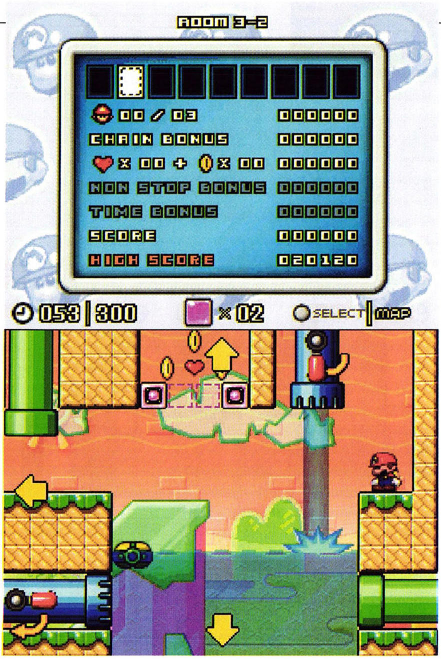
A DIRECT LINE TO DONKEY KONG

The rivalry between Mario and Donkey Kong has been simmering for 25 years, ever since the release of the original Donkey Kong arcade game. Though the pair has appeared in plenty of sports and racing games, their only head-to-head battles have been in Donkey Kong (and its reissues) and the Mario vs. Donkey Kong titles. Both Mario vs. DK games bring back classic DK elements, such as hammers and conveyor belts. In March of the Minis, Pauline (who was not in Mario vs. Donkey Kong) returns, finally. Though upstaged by Princess Peach in the mid '80s, Pauline is Mario's original girl. Her name originates from the early days of film: the '30s movie serial *The Perils of Pauline*, which featured a helpless damsel, perpetually in distress. At first a blonde (and known simply as "The Lady" in the arcade version of Donkey Kong), Pauline appeared in DK-related episodes of *Saturday Supercade* in the early '80s and reemerged as a brunette for 1994's Donkey Kong for Game Boy.


Bananas for the babe—DK only has eyes for Pauline.

Donkey Kong

Mario vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis



ROOM 3-2

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CHAIN BONUS 000000

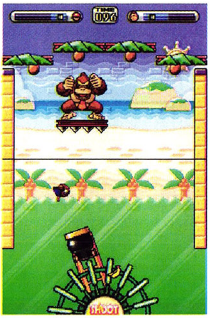
× 00 + × 00 000000

NON STOP BONUS 000000

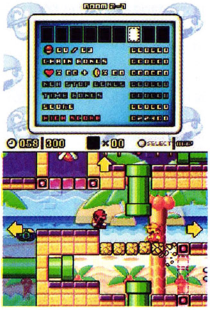
TIME BONUS 000000

SCORE 000000

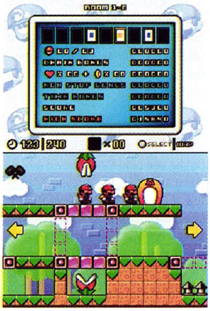
HIGH SCORE 020120

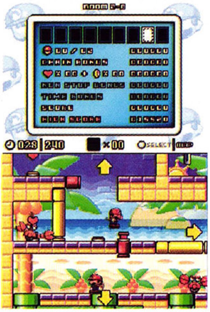


No task is too tricky for the ricocheting wonder of the Mini Marios.



If you don't want a platform to collapse, don't build it out of sand.





One push of a button changes everything.

and a mechanoid monkey that juggles toy plumbers when they waddle within its grasp. The Marios deal with creatures by using hammers (straight out of Donkey Kong), Fire Flowers (from the Super Mario Bros. series), and several other items.

In addition to leading the Mini Marios to their goal, your task is to accumulate a high score. If the little guys reach the exit as a group, one following the next in a chain, your point total increases exponentially. If you lead a gold-plated Mini Mario to the goal intact, you rack up additional points. Every level features a floating card embossed with a letter. If you manage to collect all of the cards on a floor, you'll spell M-I-N-I-M-A-R-I-O and earn a bonus.

Once you set the toys in motion, they follow their own path; sometimes they'll collect items on their own, but more often than not they'll get into trouble. If you don't stay a few steps ahead of them, you may end up with no toys remaining.

Inside the Machine

Just as the Mini Marios are made of many moving parts, so are the game's levels. Conveyor belts shuttle the Mini Marios from one point to another, but you can reverse their flow by tapping a switch with the stylus. Floor springs of all kind launch the toys skyward. Buttons, which the Mini Marios can stomp, make barriers rise in some places, and fall in others. Elevators take the toys to new heights and depths.

Each floor follows a different familiar Mario theme that influences the types of objects and obstacles that you'll encounter. The Plumber World floor, for example, features intricate pipe layouts, some of which have joints that you can turn to control the flow of the miniature playthings. The Tropical Beach floor has rocks that break into sand under the weight of the toys. Once you know how each puzzle piece affects the movement of your Mini Marios, you can hatch a plan for getting them from one point to the next without getting stomped, burned, or impaled. Victory requires puzzle-solving instincts and perfect execution.

A journey through each floor ends with a duel versus the big monkey, and the Mini Marios that you've saved from the dangers of the last level are your bullets. The wily Donkey Kong appears on the top screen, moving in and out of the scene. You aim a Mini Mario cannon on the lower screen using touch control, and launch when you have an open shot. One of your toy buddies will careen toward Kong and, hopefully, knock him for a loop. If the toy hits its mark, it'll walk away unharmed. If it meets with its demise, you'll have one less toy to fire at the beast. If you deplete the monkey's energy reserves before all of the Mini Marios are gone, you will win the battle.

Feeling mischievous? Create your own Mario vs. Donkey Kong levels and sic them on your pals.

Calling All Kongs

Do you have a mischievous spirit like Donkey Kong? Do you want to send other players into fits? It's one thing to figure out the game's puzzles and guide all of the toys to safety, but It's another thing entirely to create your own Mario vs. Donkey Kong levels and sic them on your pals. March of the Minis' level editor lets you create the platforms, place the obstacles, and plant the enemies. Since there are eight themed floors in the game, you'll have plenty of building blocks to choose from. Once you construct a level, you'll be able to send it to another player via local wireless play, or share it with the Wi-Fi community by way of Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

Nintendo's first Mario vs. Donkey Kong title wrapped elements of traditional Mario platformers into a puzzle-action package. The sequel changes character control from Mario to many Mini Marios, and incorporates touch control, giving you the ability to manipulate the toys and their surroundings. It's a different kind of puzzle-action game, but just as compelling. Players will begin lining up for the Minis' march when the game launches this fall.

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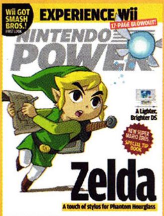
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Zelda
A touch of stylus for Phantom Hourglass

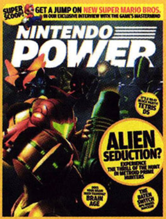
JULY 2006, VOLUME 205
The Wii Experience (Red Steel, Rayman: Raving Rabbids, Madden NFL 2007, Medal of Honor: Airborne, Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam, Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz), Signal Strength (Wi-Fi update), Touched by a Legend (The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass), Slime Time (Dragon Quest: Rocket Slime), Back from the Brink (Tomb Raider: Legend), Interview with Reggie Fils-Aime, Heavy Mental (Sudoku Gridmaster, Brain Age, and Big Brain Academy), Inside Zelda, Final Fantasy III, Point Blank DS, Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation, Summon Night: Swordcraft Story, Pac-Man World Rally, Hi Hi Puffy Amiyumi: The Genie and the Amp, Alex Rider: Stormbreaker, Barnyard, Mega Man Battle Network 6, New Super Mario Bros. Miniguide

THE TONY HAWK REVOLUTION
NINTENDO POWER
Castlevania
Portrait of Ruin

JUNE 2006, VOLUME 204
Dark Arts (Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin), Prepare for Contact (Contact), Planet of the Apes (Super Monkey Ball Adventure), Gravity Game (Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam), Framing the Game (I Am 8-Bit), 25 Mama Mia Moments (New Super Mario Bros.), X-ing Over (X-Men: The Official Game), Odama Creator Tells All (Odama), Magic Tricks (LostMagic), Inside Zelda, Cars, LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy, Magnetica, Metal Slug, Monster House, Star Trek: Tactical Assault

MAX OUT YOUR METROID BODY COUNT
NINTENDO POWER
JUMP FOR JOY!

MAY 2006, VOLUME 203
The Bros. Are Back (New Super Mario Bros.), Two Brains Are Better Than One (Brain Age), The Lost World (LostMagic), Improving on Perfection (Tetris DS), The X^3 Factor (X-Men: The Official Game), Impose Your Will (Odama), 2005 Nintendo Power Awards, The Only Game in Town (MLB 2K6), Target: Samus Aran (Metroid Prime Hunters), Inside Zelda, The Good Life (Harvest Moon: Magical Melody). LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy, Big Brain Academy, Over the Hedge, Super Monkey Ball Adventure, 2006 FIFA World Cup, Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest


GET A JUMP ON NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.
NINTENDO POWER
ALIEN SEDUCTION?

APRIL 2006, VOLUME 202
Ahead of the Game (Brain Age), 10 Things You've Never Done in Harvest Moon, Inside Zelda, Sizing Up Mario (New Super Mario Bros.), Space Race (Metroid Prime Hunters), Where There's a Drill, There's a Way (Drill Dozer), The Chibi-Robo Guide to Assisted Living, Past, Present, and Future Phantasia (Tales of Phantasia), Break the Silence (Resident Evil: Deadly Silence), Major League Baseball 2K6, Rampage: Total Destruction, Dragon Ball: Advanced Adventure, Ice Age 2: The Meltdown, Dr. Sudoku, Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier, Baten Kaitos II

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NINTENDO POWER
GONZO GAMING!
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SONIC RIDERS DRIVERS WANTED

MARCH 2006, VOLUME 201
Real Golf vs. True Swing Golf (True Swing Golf), Breaking the Mold (Chibi-Robo, Odama, Drill Dozer, The Rub Rabbits!, Super Princess Peach), Space Invaders (Metroid Prime Hunters), Inside Zelda, Animal Crossing: Water World?? (Animal Crossing: Wild World), Monkey 'Round (Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll), High on the 'Hog (Sonic Riders), 2005 Nintendo Power Award Nominations, FIFA Street 2, Harvest Moon: Magical Melody, Naruto: Ninja Council, Pokémon Trozei, Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Double Agent, Worms: Open Warfare

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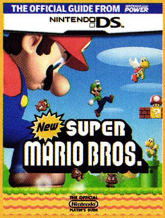
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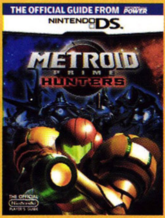
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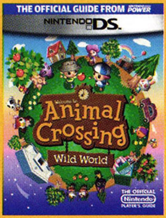
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- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP (GBA)
- MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME (DS)
- MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA (GBA)
- METROID: ZERO MISSION (GBA)
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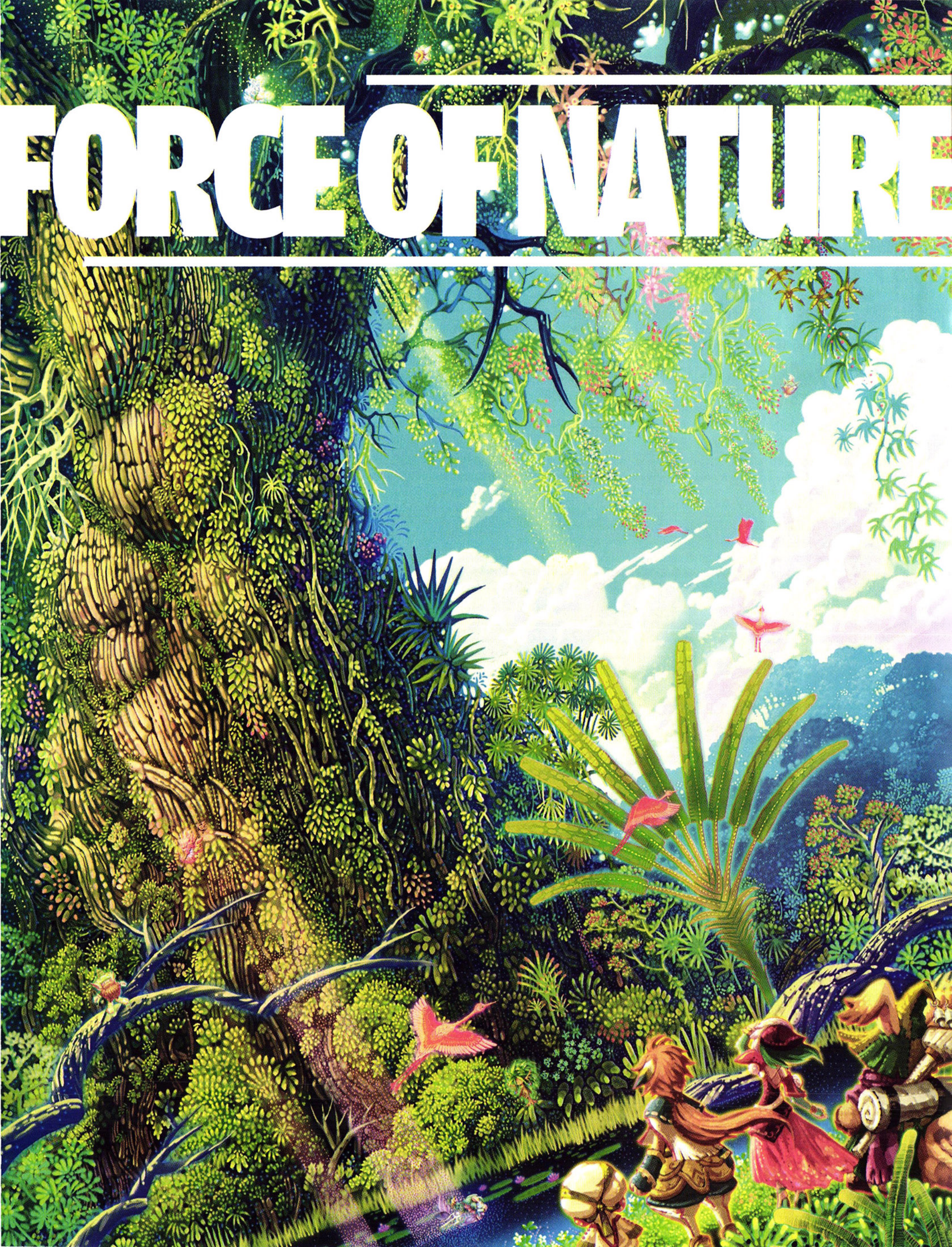
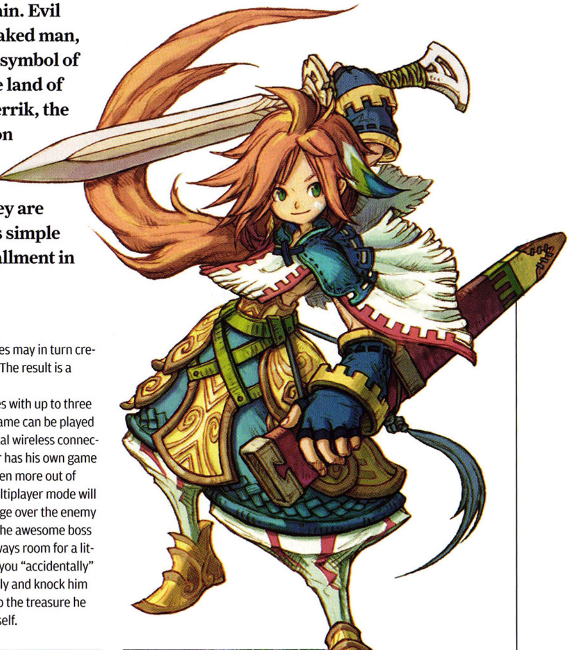
FORCE OF NATURE



An action-RPG with the emphasis on the action, Children of Mana for DS continues Square Enix's beloved Mana saga with reckless abandon.

By Chris Hoffman

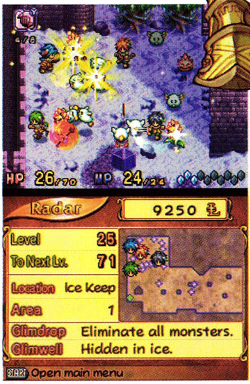
The world of Mana is in danger once again. Evil forces, led by a mysterious dark-cloaked man, are threatening the Mana Tree, the symbol of life and the magical protector of the land of Illusia. After four young heroes—Ferrik, the warrior; Tamber, a fighter who relies on speed; Poppen, the magic user; and Wanderer, a burly bunny—are spurred into action by tremors within Illusia itself, they discover that they are the only ones who can put an end to the peril. This simple plot commences Children of Mana, the latest installment in Square Enix's magical Mana series.



Chaos Theory

Even though Children of Mana is the series' first entry on DS, it provides its thrills not through stylus-driven controls (the touch screen remains an option for menus, however), but via traditional 2-D top-down combat—with an extra helping of chaos. Each dungeon is crawling with hordes of Rabbites, zombies, animate swords, and assorted nasty critters, and thanks to a physics system dubbed "ricochet reaction," even battles against the most common adversaries promise complete mayhem. Newton's third law of physics—for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction—is in full effect in CoM. When you attack an enemy, it can (and probably will) smash into other foes, nearby objects, walls, or even your hero, and these entities may in turn create collisions of their own. The result is a cacophony of combat.

When you're joining forces with up to three other players (the entire game can be played in four-player mode via local wireless connection, as long as each player has his own game card), the mayhem gets even more out of control. Cooperating in multiplayer mode will give you a distinct advantage over the enemy legions, especially during the awesome boss encounters, but there's always room for a little friendly competition. If you "accidentally" smack a barrel into your ally and knock him silly, you might as well grab the treasure he was trying to snag for himself.



Level 25
To Next Lv. 71
Location Ice Keep
Area 1
Glimdrop Eliminate all monsters.
Glimwell Hidden in ice.

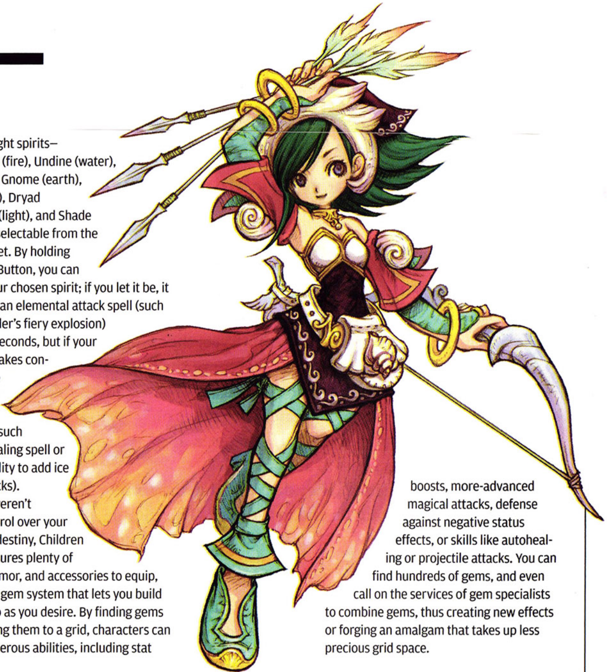
The top screen in Children of Mana is filled with action, while the bottom screen is packed with info, including locations of allies, enemies, and treasures.

Kids' Stuff

Since combat is such a major focus of Children of Mana, the developers at Square Enix have included numerous features for keeping the battles varied and to the player's liking. Four types of weapons become available as the adventure progresses: swords, flails, bows, and hammers, any two of which can be equipped at any time. Each weapon has a conventional primary attack, as well as a secondary function that's activated by holding down the attack button for a few seconds. The sword creates a reflective shield that knocks back enemy arrows and other projectiles; the flail acts as a grappling hook that can pull you toward objects (or pull enemies toward you); the bow releases musical notes that stun foes; and the hammer powers up to unleash a ground-shaking blow. Additionally, a meter in the lower-right corner of the top screen fills up whenever your hero attacks enemies or takes damage. When the meter is full, you can press Select to enter Fury mode, which temporarily adds more-powerful charge attacks to the weapons, such as a triple-shot spread attack for the bow and a crazed spin maneuver for the hammer.

Like in all other Mana games, elemental spirits are also on hand to aid in the heroes' quest. All eight spirits—Salamander (fire), Undine (water), Jinn, (wind), Gnome (earth), Luna (moon), Dryad (tree), Wisp (light), and Shade (dark)—are selectable from the game's outset. By holding down the B Button, you can summon your chosen spirit; if you let it be, it will unleash an elemental attack spell (such as Salamander's fiery explosion) after a few seconds, but if your character makes contact with the spirit, it will provide an assist spell (such as Wisp's healing spell or Undine's ability to add ice to your attacks).

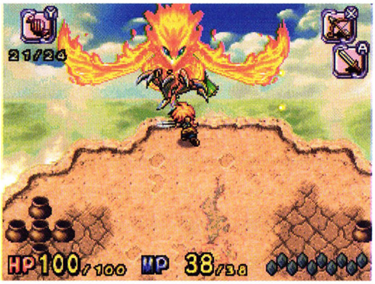
As if that weren't enough control over your character's destiny, Children of Mana features plenty of weapons, armor, and accessories to equip, along with a gem system that lets you build up your hero as you desire. By finding gems and equipping them to a grid, characters can acquire numerous abilities, including stat boosts, more-advanced magical attacks, defense against negative status effects, or skills like autohealing or projectile attacks. You can find hundreds of gems, and even call on the services of gem specialists to combine gems, thus creating new effects or forging an amalgam that takes up less precious grid space.



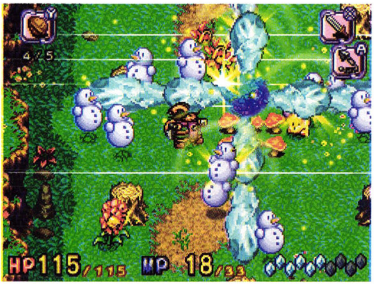
The Gleam Team

You'll get to put all your acquired skills to the test in Children of Mana's beautifully drawn towers, caves, deserts, and landscapes. The dungeon design in CoM differs from that in other Mana games and was conceived specifically with multiplayer gameplay in mind; instead of solving puzzles or throwing switches, you proceed through the dungeon by seeking out precious items called Gleamdrops. These compressed forms of the Mana Tree's power are frequently inside breakable objects or in an enemy's possession, and by finding one on each floor and placing it on a source of energy called a Gleamwell, you'll be able to move on to the dungeon's next level. To make things even more interesting, many of the dungeons are constructed in random fashion to provide a fresh experience when you return for recreational monster-slaying or if you embark on one of the game's optional side quests.

As the offspring of the SNES's Secret of Mana, one of the most revered names in action-RPGs, Children of Mana has a distinguished reputation to live up to. When it hits North American shores later this year, we'll find out if its focus on action and multiplayer fun are enough to meet fans' lofty expectations.



Every dungeon in Children of Mana culminates with a boss encounter. If you can't conquer these fierce enemies on your own, you can always bring along some friends for backup via local wireless multiplayer.



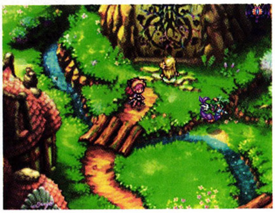
Each elemental sprite conjures up different spells, such as Undine's ability to turn foes into snowmen. You can make the spells more powerful by equipping certain gems.

Child Prodigy

The Mana Goddess is the ultimate power in Mana-series lore, but at Square Enix, senior vice president of software development Kouichi Ishii is the man responsible for guiding the entire Mana series. Not only has he been involved with the Mana games since their inception (the Game Boy original was known as Final Fantasy Adventure in North America), but he's also the series' executive producer and the man responsible for much of each game's overall design. We recently had a chance to pick the Mana master's brain about what to expect from Children of Mana and where the series might go next.

Nintendo Power: What was the primary goal you wanted to accomplish with this installment of the Mana series?
Kouichi Ishii: Basically, [I wanted to create] action that you can feel—very intense action that can put you into the game. And multiplayer gameplay was a key factor.

NP: How did you create that feeling of really being in touch with the game world?
KI: In the game, all things—such as your own player, other players (when you're in multiplayer), objects, the environment—all kind of interact with each other, react to each other, when you are playing. If you attack an enemy, then he will [collide] against an object and the object will break, and then if you bump into another player then they will react to each other as well.



NP: So this is what was called "ricochet reaction" on the game's preview video. How does it enhance gameplay?
KI: I feel that the ricochet reaction adds an element of unpredictability, chaos if you will, to the gameplay, which in itself is very exhilarating in that you don't know what's going to happen next if you do certain things, especially when you're in multiplayer when you can't read the actions of others. This was one of the things I was after. I didn't want predictable gameplay.

NP: The cinema scenes are really nice. What was it like collaborating with Production I.G on the cut-scenes?
KI: I feel that they kept the spirit of the Mana series in their work, and they were very careful to preserve that feeling of the series. I feel that it was a very good experience with them. In the Mana series, we always try to maintain this fairy-tale-type atmosphere, and when we asked Production I.G to create the cinematics for us, we asked them to create a storybook-type environment in the animation, which is not easily done. I feel that they lived up to our expectations.

NP: Where does Children of Mana fit into the Mana continuity?
KI: In terms of the new Mana series that we're putting out right now, actually, storywise, it's more of a prequel. The other game that we are working on, Dawn of Mana [for PlayStation 2], is actually the first story in the Mana series. You can consider it episode one. Where Children of Mana fits in is 10 years after the story of Dawn of Mana. It would be the second story in the whole Mana universe.

NP: How does Sword of Mana on GBA fit in?
KI: There is no exact timeline in terms of Sword of Mana's relation to [Children of Mana and Dawn of Mana], but . . . I'd figure that something like Sword of Mana is in the same world, but it would be years, tens of years, later. There is no exact spot where it is.

NP: Another thing I noticed from the video was the phrase "only once did the sword defy the goddess." What does that mean?
KI: In general, I'd like you to play the game to find out the details on what that means. But since this is about the genesis of the story—the birth of the Mana Tree, the birth of the sword, the birth of the goddess—it all comes down to that. In the beginning, the power of mana in all such things was so immense that it was almost hard to control the powers of each. What the sword is trying to do is to control the power that is about to be set loose onto the world. That much I'm able to tell you.

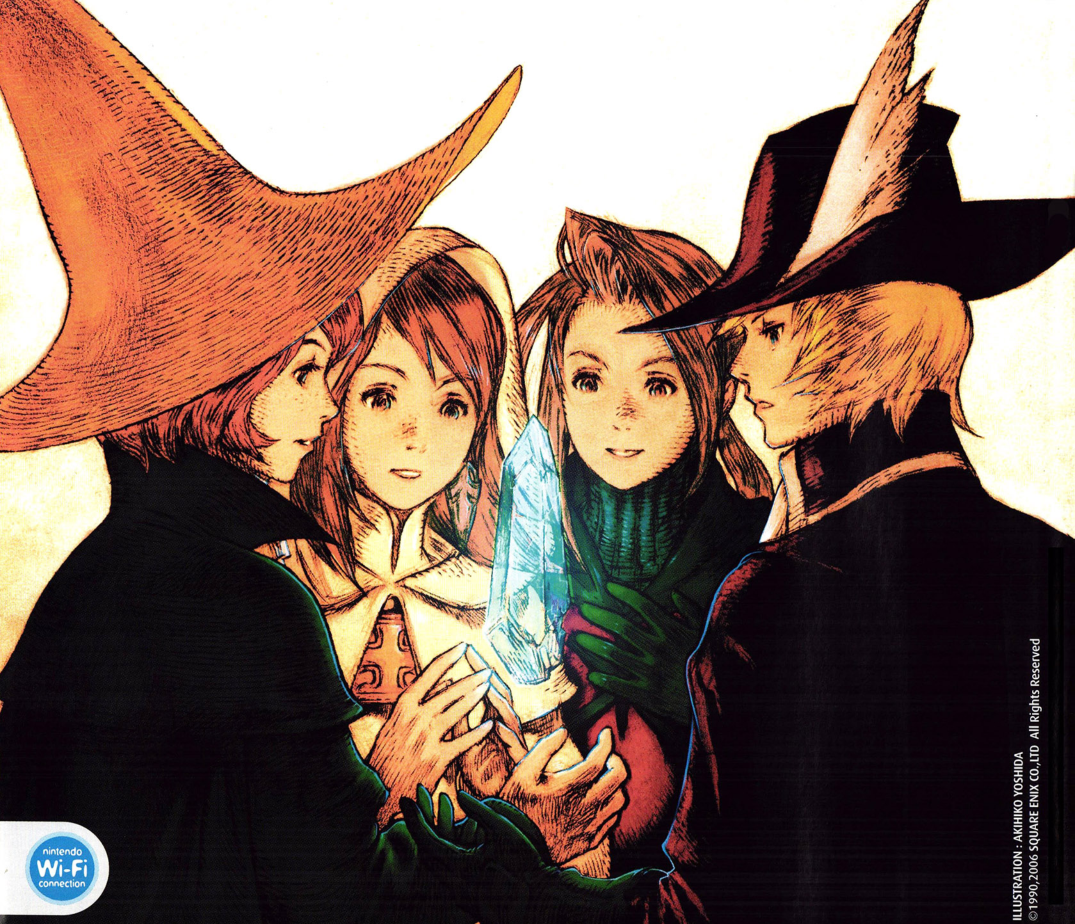
NP: What's your personal favorite weapon in Children of Mana?
KI: I prefer the hammer. The action that I wanted to portray in this current installment is well-represented in the hammer attack.

NP: What do you feel composer Kenji Ito brings to the game?
KI: Kenji Ito has been with Mana since Sword of Mana, and it has been a bit of a while since a Mana-series game has come out, so there is this sense of going back to something that he created before. I feel that he has preserved the legacy of the series very well in the music that he composed for this. You can hear newer aspects, but you can hear that he's kept the Mana spirit going.

NP: Since you're in charge of the entire Mana series, have you given any thoughts to how the series might play on Wii?
KI: I have no concrete, solid plans right now to bring the series to the Nintendo Wii, but I do feel, after seeing the Wii, that it would be quite an interesting possibility at this point.

NP: Do you have any plans to bring other Mana titles to DS? Personally, I'd love to see the earlier Mana games revisited.
KI: There are several ideas in the works right now for the series to go to portable systems. Unfortunately, I can't really reveal them at this time, but we are currently working with several ideas for bringing the Mana series to handhelds. When that does happen, I believe deeply in bringing different, diverse forms of gameplay through the Mana series. I don't like every one in the series to play the same way. So I will make sure to bring a different type of gameplay to anything that will come out in the future.

> **"I didn't want predictable gameplay."**
> **—Kouichi Ishii**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THREE'S A CHARM

The long-awaited FINAL FANTASY III is on its way to the Nintendo DS, and Square Enix is making sure this is no ordinary port. By Chris Shepperd

After years of conflict, the world finally seemed to be at peace. Now foreboding events are ready to tear the world asunder once again in FINAL FANTASY III, originally released in Japan over 15 years ago. North America will at last enjoy a new version of one of the most beloved games in the series. Square Enix has updated every inch of the classic RPG to bring us a brand new-game with a heavy dose of old-school flavor.

To call FINAL FANTASY III just another RPG would be a major understatement. Building on the groundwork that the first FINAL FANTASY games laid, FFIII contributed greatly to the genre, and had a profound impact on many later games. At its core, it was a traditional turn-based RPG—during battle, you and your enemies took turns attacking, defending, casting spells, and using items. But FFIII contained several new features, the best known of which may be its job system—instead of each character being assigned a particular class as in the preceding FF games, players could choose professions and learn job-exclusive special abilities. A player could change to a new job once he'd learned all the skills the old one had to offer. That scheme constituted the first experience-based class system in the genre. FFIII also marked the first time players could summon monsters during battle to help them fight; Summons have since become a signature feature of the series. Also making their franchise debut were the adorable Moogles, the iconic teddy-bear-like, pink-nosed creatures that inhabit the game's environments.

Crystal Clear

FINAL FANTASY III's original incarnation was on the Famicom, Japan's equivalent of the NES. Of course, its graphics were pretty rudimentary—simple pixel-drawn monsters and blocky dungeon maps were the order of the day back then. But what qualified as cutting-edge 20 years ago is far from it today. So instead of making its US debut in its original graphical form, the game has undergone a complete makeover. The folks at Square Enix have yanked FFIII into the

21st century by blessing it with a completely polygonal look. To achieve the high level of graphics, the developers are utilizing the DS in a whole new way—during some events, especially battles, the game will display on only one screen, allowing it to harness both of the DS's graphics processors (which would ordinarily power each screen separately) to unprecedented detail to the handheld.

In addition to vastly upgraded in-game graphics, FFIII also features a new cinematic intro. But don't expect the rest of the game to be heavily laden with CG—the designers would prefer to keep the action in the hands of the player. The game's director, Hiromichi Tanaka, states, "One of the main reasons is so that the players

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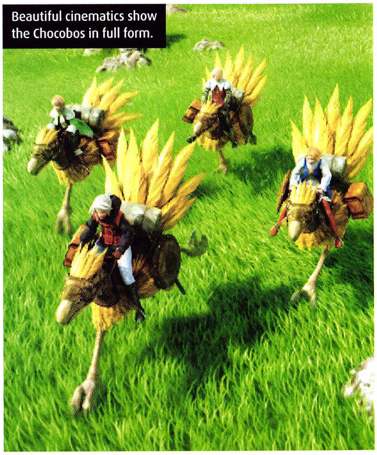
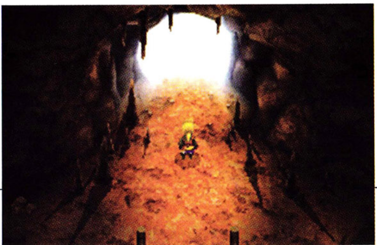
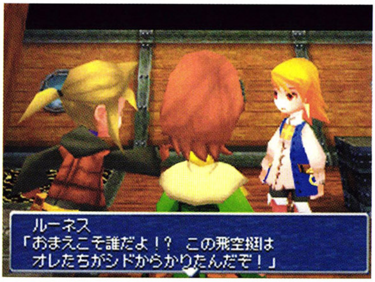


Beautiful cinematics show the Chocobos in full form.

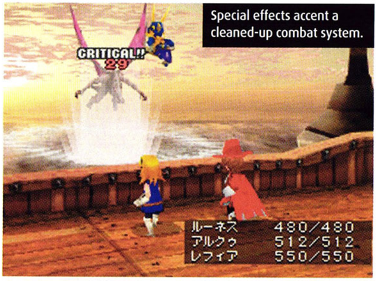
Ogle and imagine how the original game looked.



The FFIII team vows to push the DS's capabilities to the limit.



ルーネス
「おまえこそ誰だよ！？　この飛空艇は
オレたちがシドからかりたんだぞ！」



Special effects accent a cleaned-up combat system.

2Hit!!
ルーネス 61/61

remain immersed in the game throughout the experience of the main theme and main story."

A Veteran Staff

Square Enix has filled the team's ranks with veterans of the FINAL FANTASY series. Heading the project is Hiromichi Tanaka, who serves as both director and executive producer. Tanaka has been with Square since the first FINAL FANTASY game, and was one of the designers on the original FFIII—his understanding of the series is virtually unmatched. He and his group are taking the opportunity to tweak certain aspects of gameplay, as well. For example, the aforementioned job system has been altered to provide more-consistent gameplay. Tanaka explains, "In the original version you changed jobs into higher versions of the jobs you start out with, but this time around the jobs have been rebalanced so that all the jobs are viable to the end game." FFV and FFVI inspired many of the improvements to the job system, particularly the special moves that are available to each job. Aside Tanaka, Tomoya Asano is working as the game producer—his game credits include work on the Full Metal Alchemist series.

Veterans of the franchise will be pleased to hear that famed Nobuo Uematsu, composer of the game's original score, has returned to supervise the arrangement of the in-game music, as well as to create a new orchestral version of the opening theme.

The locations of towns and dungeons will remain the same relative to each other, but the new style will bring them to life like never before. Ryosuke Aiba, the art director of FINAL FANTASY XI and a member of both the Xenogears and Chrono Cross teams, is leading the renovation project. The FFIII team put character creation in the hands of the acclaimed Akihiko Yoshida, lead character designer for FINAL FANTASY XII, as well as for the action-RPG Vagrant Story and the GBA hit FINAL FANTASY Tactics Advance. His unique and recognizable style, combined with Aiba's expertise, should infuse a huge amount of personality into the look and feel of FINAL FANTASY III.

ルーネス 63/63
アルクゥ 84/84
レフィア 86/86
イングズ 86/88

The Final Word

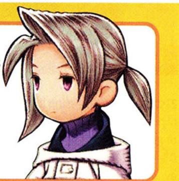
Although FFIII is undergoing major improvements in virtually every aspect of the game, the original storyline remains largely unchanged. The tale begins with an earthquake near the village of Ur, revealing a long-concealed shrine in a nearby cave. Four orphans go exploring deep within the cav-

ALL FOR ONE

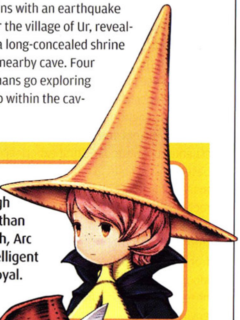
FANTASTIC FOUR

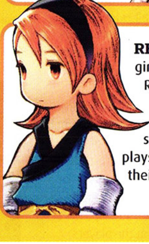
The FINAL FANTASY III saga tells the stories of four young orphans who are very different from one another. The game focuses mostly on Luneth, an intrepid boy from the Village of Ur. But fate has laid out important roles for all of the characters; they must each do their part to save the world from destruction.

LUNETH Destiny guides the leader of the party's adventurous spirit.

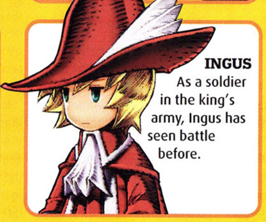


ARC Though shier than Luneth, Arc is intelligent and loyal.





REFIA The only girl in the party, Refia is an apprentice metal smith—her skill plays a large part in their adventure.

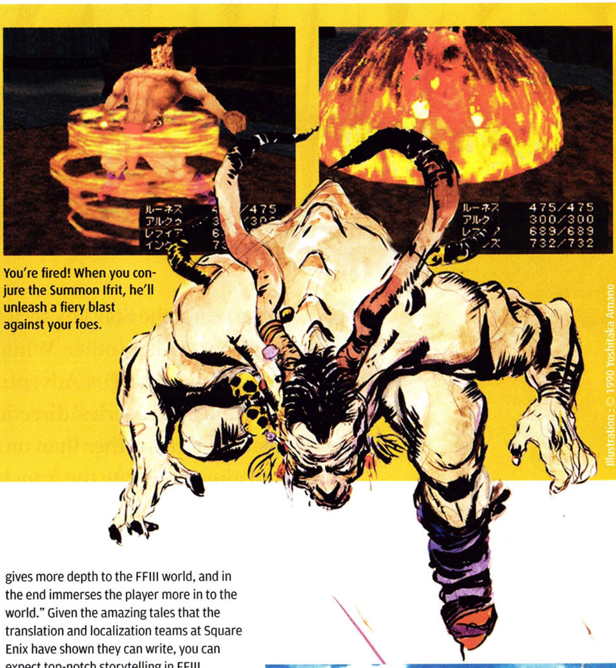


INGUS As a soldier in the king's army, Ingus has seen battle before.

ON DEMAND

UNLEASH THE BEASTS

One of FFIII's biggest claims to fame is the introduction of the Summon ability. During battle, your characters can invoke giant monsters to aid them in combat. The DS remake doesn't include any new Summons, but the monsters and their powerful attacks have been given graphical updates.



You're fired! When you conjure the Summon Ifrit, he'll unleash a fiery blast against your foes.

Illustration: © 1990 Yoshitaka Amano

122
7Hit!!
ルーネス 1034/1034
アルクゥ 1009/1009
レフィア 915/915

ern, where they find a crystal emanating light. The crystal instructs them to restore balance throughout the world. Bewildered, the children nevertheless charge off on their quest. During their travels, they will learn more and more about the mission and their destiny as heroes.

What is changing, however, is the way the story is presented. Because this is the first time FFIII has reached North American shores, it is also the first time it's been translated fully into English. This is doubtless a good thing—developers recognize the impact of a well-done translation job much more now than in the past. Asano is excited about the prospects, saying, "The biggest feature is that the main characters have been given personalities. That, of course, gives more depth to the FFIII world, and in the end immerses the player more in to the world." Given the amazing tales that the translation and localization teams at Square Enix have shown they can write, you can expect top-notch storytelling in FFIII.

Finishing Touch

It appears that the game will employ the touch screen liberally. Using the stylus, you can move your character, interact with people and objects, and navigate menus quickly. We were impressed with our hands-on time—everything felt very intuitive and fast.

Square Enix is remaining coy about other new features to be introduced with this version, but we have some hunches. First, Square has indicated that there will be some usage of Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, allowing online play. But how they intend to use the service remains to be seen—cooperative play in custom-designed dungeons, head-to-head battles, or maybe the appearance of your characters in a friend's game, perhaps? If FINAL FANTASY I&II: Dawn of Souls is any indication, you can also expect expansions onto the single-player game, including extra dungeons and possible side missions. We're hoping for all of the above.

More to come?

And what about other games getting the same treatment as FFIII down the road? Nothing is planned right now, but Asano left us with hope: "If the reaction of the users is very favorable to FFIII, we might see more of this kind of remake in the future."

CRITICAL!!
781
9Hit!!
ルーネス 1029/1089
アルクゥ 1127/1127
レフィア 1214/1214
イングズ 1129/1129

「サラ姫様が！
…まさかジンにさらわれたの

The heroes will even talk to ghosts on occasion.

COMMAND PERFORMANCE

Fox and friends are back in **Star Fox Command**, the series' high-flying handheld debut.

By Andy Myers

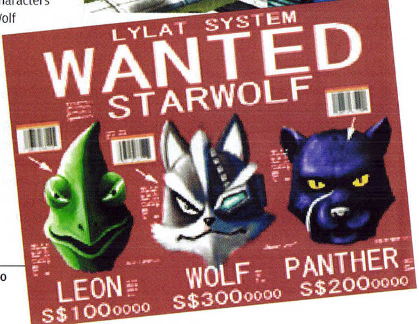
Over the years, the Star Fox series has provided flight experiences like no other. While its two most recent installments—Star Fox Adventures and Star Fox: Assault—changed the series' direction by putting the emphasis on ground battles rather than on air combat, Star Fox Command aims to elevate the franchise with a brand-new title that focuses primarily on its defining feature: flying!

Crazy like a fox.

FOX TALE

The futuristic space saga of Star Fox Command once again revolves around Fox McCloud, the finest Arwing pilot in the Lylat system. It's been years since Fox and his team—Peppy Hare, Falco Lombardi, and Slippy Toad—took down the mad genius Andross. Fox and his friends have since gone their separate ways, but a new threat to the Lylat system has brought the team together again. Andross's old base of operations, planet Venom, has begun spewing a new species of monster called the Anglor from its acidic oceans. Under the command of a ruthless emperor on Venom, the creatures have only one goal—wreaking havoc on the surrounding planets, including Fox's home planet of Corneria. Only team Star Fox is capable of defeating the Anglor and restoring peace.

While the story centers around the new menace, Star Fox Command will feature familiar characters from all corners of the series' universe. Wolf O'Donnell, Leon Powalski, and Panther Caroso, collectively known as Team Star Wolf (the rivals of Team Star Fox who first appeared in the N64 game), will make return appearances (but as friends or foes?), and female fox Krystal (whom Fox met during his adventures on the Dinosaur Planet) will be back as well. Whether or not this means love is in the air remains to be seen—Fox more or less dumped Krystal so she wouldn't be subjected to the dangers of his profession.

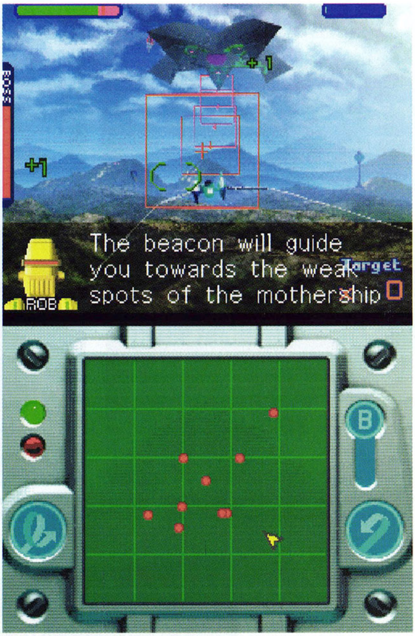


©2006 Nintendo

STAY ON TARGET

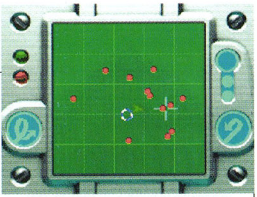
Though Star Fox Command is in many ways a return to the series' roots, piloting an Arwing feels completely new thanks to the DS touch screen. Aside from firing your weapons (you activate your main guns by pressing any button), all control is delegated to the stylus. The lower screen is essentially your Arwing's cockpit, and the stylus is your tool for interacting with it. You'll steer your craft through the game's free-roaming worlds simply by moving the stylus around the radar display. Double-tapping the stylus on the top half of the display will initiate boost, and double-tapping on the lower half will slow you down. As always, Fox has access to bombs to help him out of tricky situations, but in Command, you actually choose the impact point by dragging and dropping the bomb icon onto the radar.

The developers have made room for more-complex moves as well. Holding down a button will lock on to an enemy (you'll fire a homing missile upon releasing the button), while advanced maneuvers—loop-the-loops and U-turns—are mapped to touch-screen buttons. But perhaps Fox's most important trick is making the Arwing roll (slide the stylus back and forth on the touch screen). Not only does spinning deflect enemy fire, but it lets you pick up nearby items.

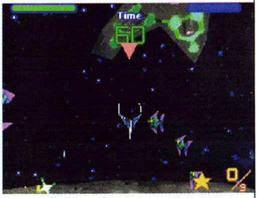


The beacon will guide you towards the weak spots of the mothership

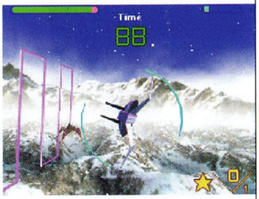
The lower screen is where you'll control the Arwing's movements with the stylus, and note enemy positions on the real-time radar.



Bombing foes has never been so precise. Simply drag a bomb out of your inventory and directly onto the radar display.



If an enemy is hot on your tail, you can press the loop-the-loop button on the touch screen to turn the tables.

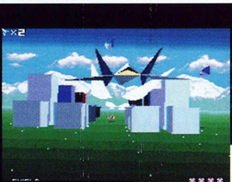


When you use the Arwing's spin move to deflect enemy fire, you'll receive a time bonus.

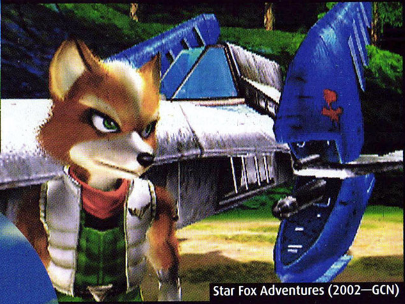
BLAST FROM THE PAST

A Star Fox Retrospective

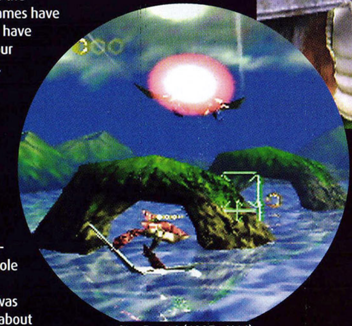
Star Fox has been among the Nintendo elite since the Super NES days, but unlike other franchises, its games have been few and far between. Though Fox and Falco have appeared in the Super Smash Bros. series, only four released games bear the Star Fox name. The first, 1993's Star Fox for SNES, was a game way ahead of its time, ushering in the 3-D era by way of the Super FX chip. Four years later, fan favorite Star Fox 64 picked up where the original left off, giving gamers their first taste of rumble (a feature that has since become standard in console games). Another five years passed before we saw Star Fox Adventures on the GCN. Though the game had some flying levels, its focus was an on-foot adventure story involving series newcomer Krystal. The GameCube has been the only console to host two Star Fox games, the other being last year's Star Fox: Assault. Most of Assault's action was also on the ground, but the gameplay was more about shooting than adventuring.



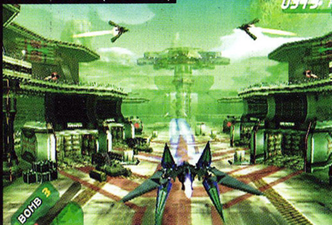
Star Fox (1993—SNES)



Star Fox Adventures (2002—GCN)



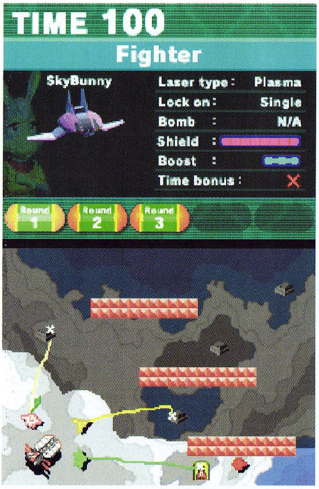
Star Fox 64 (1997—N64)



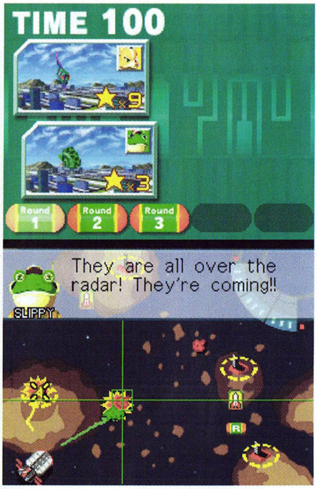
Star Fox: Assault (2005—GCN)

FLIGHT PATTERNS

In addition to flying and shooting, Star Fox Command, as its name suggests, offers a new element: strategic commanding. While engaged in one of the game's 30 missions, you must command your deployed vessels (one of which is Fox's Arwing) to protect your mother ship, Great Fox. Between battle sequences you're given control of each ship's basic route, which you must draw with the stylus. These segments are turn-based—you move, then the enemy moves. Flight patterns must be drawn carefully, as each ship can go only a certain distance based on how much fuel is available. Strategy is key; if you stray too far from Great Fox or fail during a battle sequence, enemy ships can overtake you quickly and destroy your vessel. This all-new aspect of gameplay is the game's most surprising feature. It may sound complex, but it's a lot of fun, and it helps break up the game's action-packed air battles.



Protect the mother ship at all costs! Draw flight routes using the stylus to thwart enemy plans.

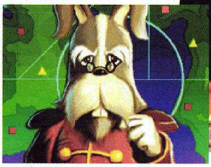


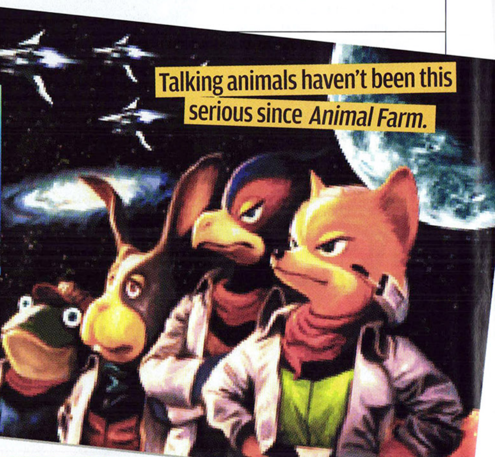
You'll have a limited number of rounds to achieve your goal, and limited time to complete a skirmish in one piece.

LYLAT AND BEYOND!

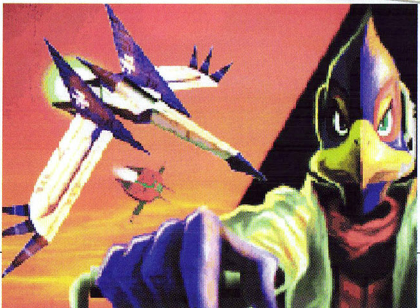
Star Fox Command isn't just the first flying-focused Star Fox title in nine years, it's also the first to reach a handheld system. Thankfully, the game takes full advantage of the DS's wireless capabilities. Up to eight players can fight it out using 15 different aircraft through the game's wireless multiplayer mode. In addition, the title will be playable over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, enabling worldwide dogfights for up to four players.

Further details on Star Fox Command are still under wraps, but we do know that members of the original Star Fox and Star Fox 64 development teams are hard at work on this title. Star Fox Command was undoubtedly one of the best DS games shown at E3, and it received rave reviews on the show floor. It is also one of our most anticipated DS titles this year, and will likely be a frontrunner for best Wi-Fi game. When Star Fox Command lands this August, Fox fans can rejoice—this is a title worthy of bearing the venerable name.





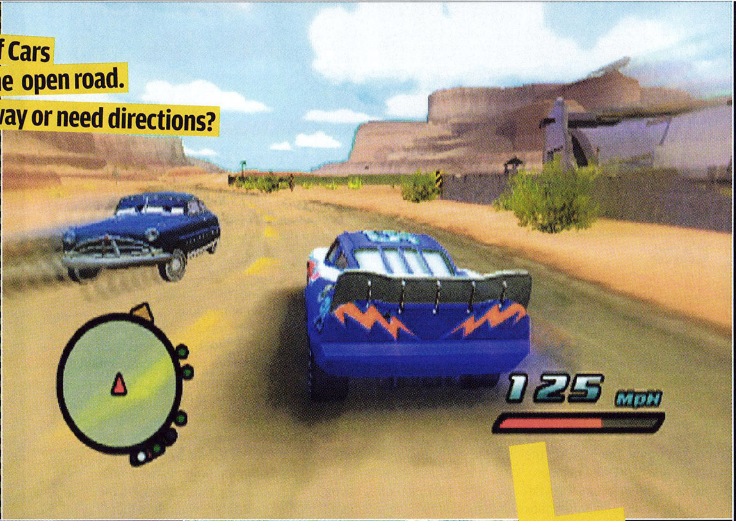
Talking animals haven't been this serious since *Animal Farm.*



REVIEWS

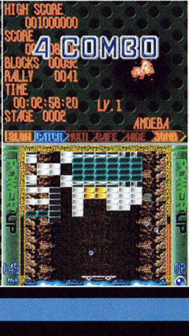
In-depth reviews of the latest games

The GCN version of Cars explores the open road. Does it find its way or need directions?



Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest and more.

86
Mega Man does a lot of networking. He's back with two versions of Battle Network 6.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STAGE 0002
AMOEBA
POWER UP
POWER UP

85
Break'Em All updates a classic with touch control.

85
Will DS shoot-'em-up Point Blank hit the mark?

ENTER SANDBOX

FREE RIDE

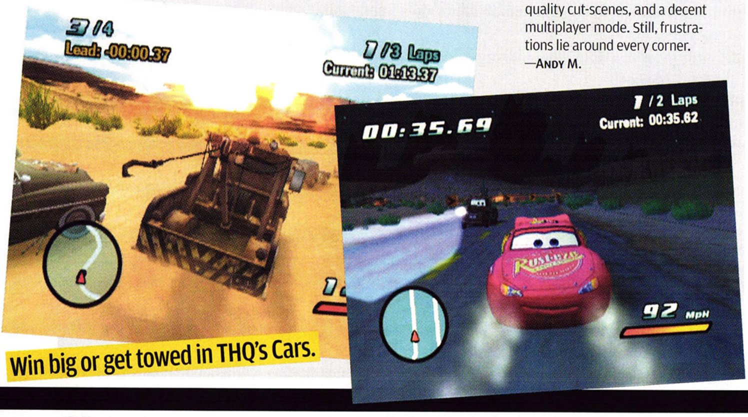
CARS

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo Gamecube**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **Rainbow Studios**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Open-ended, sandbox-style games are a dime a dozen, and predictably aimed at adult gamers. With Cars for GCN (based on the Disney/Pixar movie of the same name), THQ and Rainbow Studios are trying something different: a family-friendly sandbox game. In some respects, they've succeeded. The game, surprisingly, takes a number of cues from Grand Theft Auto—you can go anywhere you want whenever you want, and take missions at your own leisure to advance the story and unlock more areas. Cars looks and plays well, much to the credit of the game's playful driving physics and special moves, which include jumping and driving backward. You'll play primarily as the movie's main character, Lightning McQueen, though some missions will put you in control of other cars, such as Guido and Mater. (Mater's destruction-derby race is one of the game's highlights, harking back to the old-school arcade game Super Off Road.) Although the basic controls in Cars are amusing, they also contribute the game's low difficulty, even when you're playing on the higher of the two difficulty levels. The game is unduly forgiving; so much that it's almost always beneficial to wander off course during a race, as you'll be transported back to the track at a higher position!

The sandbox aspect of Cars is fun at first, but once you realize that there's not much to do aside from racing missions, you'll start to wonder why it's a sandbox game at all. You can collect bonus points and play a few minigames, but for the most part racing is the only worthwhile activity. And traveling from one race to the next gets old quickly in the game's expansive world, especially while attempting to navigate its near-useless map. It's too bad, really, because Cars has the makings of a great all-ages sandbox game. It looks nice, it plays nice, and it has plenty of unlockables, quality cut-scenes, and a decent multiplayer mode. Still, frustrations lie around every corner.
—Andy M.



Win big or get towed in THQ's Cars.

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT WAS YOUR STAND-OUT DS GAME OF E3?

Another E3 in the books, another great showing by the Nintendo DS—we asked our reviewers their handheld highlights.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Two issues ago I said I was hoping for a Phoenix Wright sequel, and Capcom delivered, if only in video form. Elite Beat Agents also blew me away, and I'm no rhythm-game fan.

STEVEN GRIMM

The DS will be an RPG dream machine. How can I possibly choose among Final Fantasy III, Magical Vacation, and Children of Mana?

CHRIS SHEPPERD

It's a little early to fully be singing its praises, but Children of Mana seems to be shaping up nicely. Mario vs. DK 2 looks like a kick, too.

ANDY MYERS

When Phantom Hourglass was revealed at GDC, I had major reservations about controlling Link with a stylus; but the E3 demo erased all my doubts.

GEORGE SINFIELD

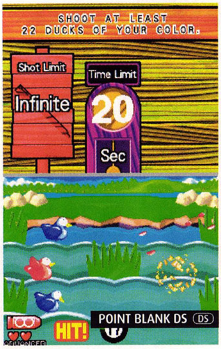
Not having any exposure to it as a Japanese phenomenon, I was completely surprised by Elite Beat Agents. I haven't laughed as much since picking up the first WarioWare title.

STEVE THOMASON

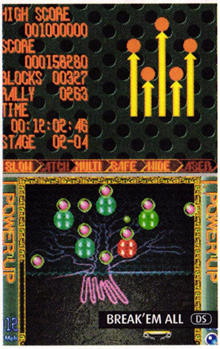
I can't believe none of these other blasphemers even mentioned Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin. The playable demo at E3 was fantastic.

PETE MICHAUD

Final Fantasy III was my DS highlight. It's the first 3-D FF title in the main series to grace a Nintendo platform, and I can't flippin' wait.



POINT BLANK DS (DS)



BREAK'EM ALL (DS)

POINT BLANK DS

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Namco Bandai**
DEVELOPER: **Namco Bandai**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

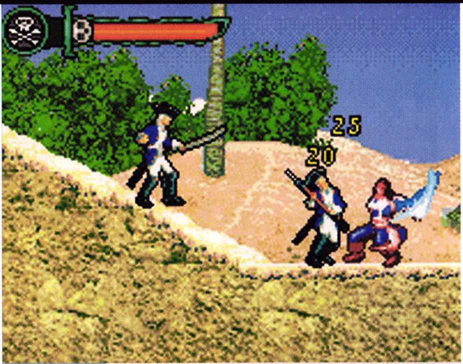
Namco's Point Blank series (which originated in the arcade, then migrated to the PlayStation before making its DS debut) takes a WarioWare-esque approach to the shooting genre. It offers a wacky smorgasbord of rapid-fire challenges—from blasting cardboard ninjas to shearing sheep—that have typically made for a pretty good time. Unfortunately, something's been lost in the translation from light gun to stylus. Everything is technically sound: The DS version offers more than 40 minigames (most of them taken from previous installments); the graphics, though simplistic, are colorful and charming; and the stylus control is sufficiently accurate. That you don't have to aim, per se, might lead you to believe that the game is too easy, but that's not the problem (the advanced difficulty levels are, in fact, quite challenging). It's that light-gun games are never fun when played with a controller . . . or with a stylus, as it turns out. Point Blank is supposed to be a virtual shooting gallery, and without a gun in your hand, you're missing that tactile feeling that's so crucial to the experience. Tapping things with the stylus just isn't the same as pulling the trigger. The game does offer a wealth of play modes, including single-card download play and a Brain Massage mode that analyzes your performance in some truly bizarre ways (such as presenting your score in terms of "sock-washing authority"). It's quirky, likable and entertaining in short bursts, but Point Blank just isn't Point Blank without a light gun. —**Steven T.**

BREAK'EM ALL

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **D3PA**
DEVELOPER: **Warashi**
ESRB: **Everyone**

From time to time I buy games just because they're fun little diversions. I love the Zeldas and Final Fantasys, but they require a larger time commitment. "Fun little diversion" is exactly the term for this gem of a budget title. In its graphics and gameplay, Break'em All borrows heavily from Arkanoid, Breakout, and Alleyway—you control a horizontally sliding paddle (via the stylus or L and R Buttons) at the bottom of the screen while trying your best to keep the bouncing ball from going off-screen while you clear screens upon screens of breakaway bricks. The ability to select your own power-ups puts a nice spin on this style of game, and at the end of every few levels (in Quest mode) you square off with a unique boss. If you're looking for variety, there's Tokoton mode, which boasts a whopping 3,000,000 different screens that appear at random—providing a different experience every time you play. Break'em All has a reasonably deep multiplayer mode, and fans of single-card multiplayer will rejoice in the fact that all of the games are playable with only one game card. As for its single player component, Break'em All has you competing against high scores, which gives the title an arcade feel that may not appeal to everyone. —**Pete M.**



BOOTY CALL

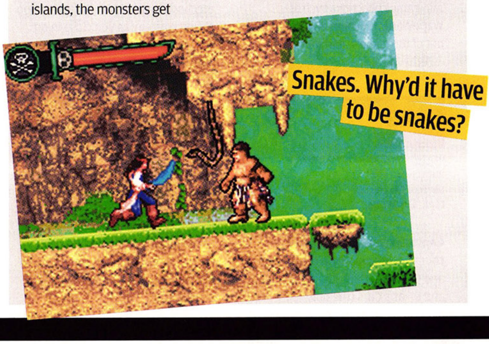
AVAST, YE GBA!

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST

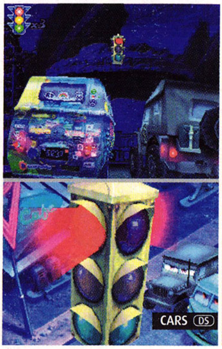
RATING: 7.5

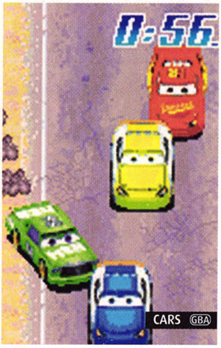
PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Buena Vista Games**
DEVELOPER: **Amaze Entertainment**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

Given the popularity of the recent Castlevania handheld titles, it's surprising that more developers don't incorporate the best elements of that series into their own games. Fortunately, the folks behind Pirates of the Caribbean are paying attention. In front of a lush backdrop of beaches, jungles, and caves, Captain Jack must use a combination of his trusty sword, crude grenades, throwing daggers, and other weapons to slice up a solid variety of enemies. As you explore the islands, the monsters get tougher and tougher, and stores situated at each island's docks will sell you stronger weapons and sturdier armor. Sailing between the islands can also be a lot of fun—you have to keep one eye on the wind direction while watching out for British naval ships and brigands looking to send you to the briny depths. You can upgrade your ship (as you can your character)—purchase hulls, cannons, and sails to help you make it from one port to the next. The game seems to drag on at times (especially the low-payoff side quests), and several aspects never come into play fully, such as recruiting first mates and maintaining the morale of your shipmates. Regardless, it's nice to see that game makers haven't stuffed the GBA into Davy Jones's locker just yet, and that some developers still know that a big-name franchise isn't an excuse to make a half-baked game. —**Chris S.**



Snakes. Why'd it have to be snakes?





CARS

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **Helixe**
ESRB: **Everyone**

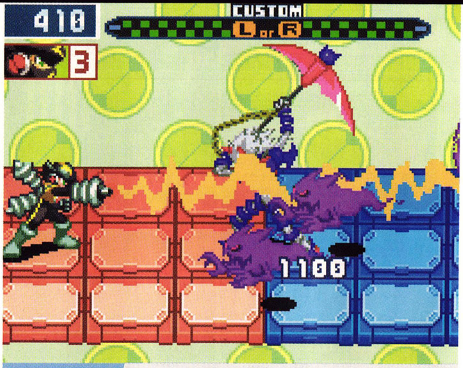
When a game based on a movie about racing cars comes out, you'd expect it to be a racing game, right? Well, Cars for DS is something else. Though it includes racing elements, it's more a collection of minigames than a racer. Cars includes 12 stylus-oriented activities (each focusing on a character from the movie), as well as four racing levels. Unfortunately, many of the minigames don't work well, and the difficulty levels are way out of whack. In contrast, the racing levels are devoid of any challenge. But Cars also has good qualities, including great graphics and clever use of the touch screen. And it has its fun moments—my favorites are Ramone's hydraulic jumping minigame and Guido's tire-stacking minigame. Cars for DS is unique—it doesn't resemble its GCN or GBA counterparts in the slightest. Fans of the movie will appreciate the distinction, and fans of minigame collections such as WarioWare: Touched! may get a kick out of the game's quirkiness.
—**Andy M.**

CARS

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **Helixe**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Capturing a sense of speed is, of course, a big plus for a racing game, and the GBA adaptation of Disney and Pixar's Cars (the only full-time racer in THQ's fleet of three Cars games for Nintendo systems) really cooks. Not only does your vehicle move at an impressive rate, but when it wipes out, it self-corrects, minimizing the time that you spend pointing in the wrong direction. The camera follows your vehicle closely (presumably to help communicate that sense of speed and to give you a good view of star car Lightning McQueen), but as a result you have only three to four car-lengths of visibility, which doesn't give you enough time to line up for boost pads. Though arrows do pop up to warn you of upcoming turns, a main-screen map or a pulled-back view (like that of Orbital's Racing Gears Advance) would have helped ensure that you don't need the reflexes of an actual race-car driver to keep from hitting the wall after every turn. More successful than the game's 11 winding-road races are four speedway events on ovals. During the speedway events, the turns are much more predictable and uniform than on the other tracks, and you can earn boost speed by drifting behind your rivals—a play mechanic that allows you to develop racing strategy as you close in on your goal. Unlockables include 16 stills from the film and a cast of controllable supporting cars. After you earn the gold trophy in a road race, you can return to the same track for a coin-collecting challenge that would be a good bonus if it weren't so frustrating. If you zip past any of the 12 coins (which you are likely to do), you'll be unable to turn around for a second pass due to the self-correction I mentioned earlier. Cars is a decent racer, but ultimately, it is too fast and too rigid for its own good.
—**George S.**



BEASTS WARS

NOTHIN' BUT 'NET

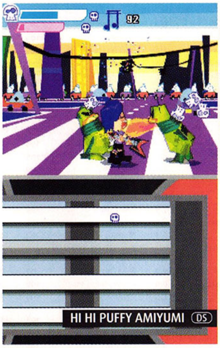
MEGA MAN BATTLE NETWORK 6: CYBEAST GREGAR & CYBEAST FALZAR

RATING: 7.5

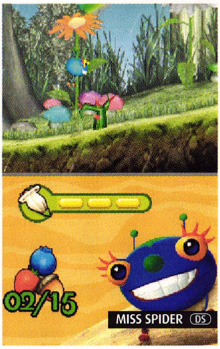
PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Capcom**
DEVELOPER: **Capcom**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Another year, another Mega Man Battle Network. Everything that fans of the series are familiar with remains fully intact in the latest chapter of the saga of Lan Hikari and his virtual buddy Mega Man: strategic yet action-packed battles, tons of Battle Chip weapons to acquire, a lighthearted story filled with cybernetic intrigue, and vast customization features. As always, though, Capcom has made plenty of tweaks to the solid formula. Lan's relocation to a new city provides some interesting new story elements and a nice change of scenery, while the new Cross System (an improved version of the character-merging Soul Unison from previous games in the series) and the ability to BeastOut with the awesome might of a Cybeast substantially beef up the gameplay; the Cross System and BeastOut can even be combined to provide maximum power. Though this might sound like gibberish to the uninitiated, the result is more combat options, more strength for Mega Man, and less frustration when you properly take advantage of the new battle techniques. As usual, the two versions of the game (Cybeast Gregar and Cybeast Falzar) offer distinct weapons and abilities.

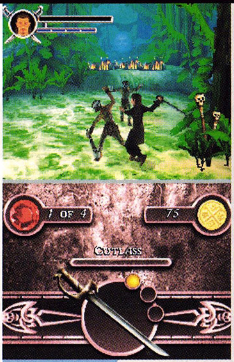
Although MMBN6 doesn't fix the problems that have plagued the series since the beginning—dull level design and way too many pointless random battles—the varied challenges throughout the game's dungeons emphasize fun over tedium. Scenes in which you drive a train or enter button sequences to slice virtual veggies are way more enjoyable than the well-intentioned but freakishly difficult strategy battles in the previous MMBN installment; the pacing and difficulty in MMBN6 are spot-on. The only thing missing is the extremely handy map feature from the DS version of Mega Man Battle Network 5. Why Capcom didn't just continue this series on DS, I haven't a clue. Despite there being some room for improvement, I have no problem calling Mega Man Battle Network 6 the series' best entry yet. —**Chris H.**

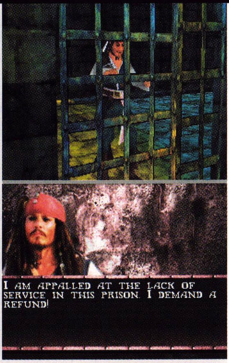


HI HI PUFFY AMIYUMI (DS)



MISS SPIDER (DS)





I AM APPALLED AT THE LACK OF SERVICE IN THIS PRISON. I DEMAND A REFUND!

HI HI PUFFY AMIYUMI: THE GENIE & THE AMP

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: D3PA
DEVELOPER: D3PA
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Okay, I'll admit that I have a huge crush on Yumi, and I have since before the pop duo launched a Cartoon Network hit show. Unfortunately, not even cupid's arrow can reconcile my disdain for the DS side-scrolling brawler that bears the name of the object of my affection. Your mission is to hop around through time, finding musical instruments that contain magic that will help you write your next rock masterpiece. You must strum the strings of your guitar on the touch screen to beat through the waves of monsters that prevent you from reaching your goal. The action is repetitive and nasty—you're supposed to pull off combos by plucking the strings in a particular order, but the enemies gang up on you constantly, preventing you from finishing your big-damage riffs. The game also suffers from a bias toward right-handers—you can use the four face buttons to wield your guitar, but it's not as intuitive or fun as the touch-control scheme. The levels are unbearably long, and if you die you have to go all the way back to the beginning; for better or worse, you'll rarely encounter any monsters the next time through. It's difficult to gauge the quality of the game's graphics—do the graphics look mediocre because they're going for a simpler, cartoonlike feel; or does the game just not look good due to a lack of effort or development time? It's hard to say. Two strong positive notes are the high-quality rockin' pop that the duo is best known for, and plenty of photos of my girl Yumi. Other than that, there isn't much to see. —CHRIS S.

ALSO THIS MONTH

Elephant king and children's-book character Babar steps into action when his sons float away in a hot-air balloon in The Game Factory's **Babar to the Rescue** (GBA). Eight platforming levels have the hero hopping across gaps, swinging from vine to vine, and treading through snow as he catches up with the wayward princes. A simple tutorial eases first-time players into the game. . . . Also from The Game Factory, **Miss Spider's Harvest Time Hop and Fly** (DS) transports young gamers to Sunny Patch for 2-D play in a 3-D world. Miss Spider's children Dragon, Bounce, Squirt, Wiggle, and Shimmer float through 24 levels, collecting food and avoiding trouble. . . . **Sudoku Mania** (DS), from UFO Interactive, offers traditional, randomly generated Sudoku puzzles, as well as Sudoku variations that replace numbers with graphic symbols. A two-player versus mode and adjustable skill levels add depth. . . . If you haven't caught up with the handheld adventures of the heroes in a halfshell, Konami's **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Double Pack** (GBA) is your chance. The original TMNT GBA title spotlights each of the turtles in a variety of activities including motorcycle riding. The follow-up, Battle Nexus, offers more than 40 fighting levels over five cartoon worlds.

DEPP CHARGE

SUNKEN TREASURE

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: BUENA VISTA GAMES
DEVELOPER: AMAZE
ESRB: TEEN

The pieces are all there for a solid swashbuckling adventure in the DS version of Dead Man's Chest. It has a fast-frame-rate 3-D engine with a serviceable camera scheme, three playable characters (the principles from the new *Pirates of the Caribbean* film), a two player co-op option, and a treasure trove of unlockables. The whole, however, is less than the sum of its parts. Taking you through the movie story, the game focuses on one character's plight at a time, filling the space between plot points with fight after fight after tediously drawn-out fight. To move from one area to the next, you are forced to defeat all scalawags, skeletons, natives, and other roaming ruffians within reach. And that's the adventure. Levels are linear (with light barrier-removing puzzles) and boss battles are similar to standard battles, only the enemies are slightly larger and they come with a health meter. There's nothing wrong with fighting a long line of baddies. It's just not very engaging after you've done it for several hours without a break for plundering, sailing, or other piratey activities. There's just no "arrggh!" there.

Each character is equipped with an entertaining signature attack, up to nine advanced combos (doled out as the game progresses), and expendable weapons that range from blades to pirate-era firearms. The battle locations, which include Prison Island, Port Royal, and Isla de Pelegostos, are lush, but the interiors are much too dark. The onscreen dialogue is worthy of (if not lifted from) the movie, yet words on the screen don't have the same punch as spoken dialogue delivered with Johnny Depp's Keith Richards-inspired slur would have. Three simple touch-controlled minigames add variety, but not enough to give a shine to this lackluster effort. —GEORGE S.

You know you've had too much seafood when . . .

[ARCHIVE]

HIGHEST PLATFORM

What does a game have to do to get a perfect 10 around here? Since NP's redesign, which introduced our 10-point scale, the highest score that a game has received is a 9.5. New Super Mario Bros. (a new addition to the Archive) earned a 9.5 from all four of its reviewers, which means that it's close to perfection, and one of the best games to come along in years. Its faithfulness to other SMB games brought it near the top, but also kept it from going over the edge. So, we continue to wait for that first perfect 10.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
American Chopper 2: Full Throttle	5.0	Activision	201	T
Batman Begins	6.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Battalion Wars	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2	2.5	Activision	200	T
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures	6.5	Activision	198	T
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	7.5	Activision	200	T
Chaos Field	6.0	0~3	200	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2.5	Global Star	195	E
Chibi-Robo	8.0	Nintendo	201	E10+
Chicken Little	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	5.5	Buena Vista	199	T
Crash Tag Team Racing	7.0	Vivendi	198	E10+
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	7.5	Nintendo	198	E
Dora the Explorer: Journey to the Purple Planet	N/A	Global Star	198	EC
Fantastic Four	6.0	Activision	194	T
FIFA Soccer 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
FIFA Street 2	7.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	9.5	Nintendo	197	T
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	5.5	Konami	197	E
From Russia with Love	7.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
Geist	5.0	Nintendo	196	M
Gun	8.0, 8.5	Activision	199	M
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	7.5	Natsume	195	E
Harvest Moon: Magical Melody	9.0,9.5	Natsume	203	E
Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue	5.0	Namco	196	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	5.0	Vivendi	203	E10+
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	8.5	Vivendi	196	T
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	7.5	THQ	198	E10+
Kao the Kangaroo: Round 2	2.5	Atari	203	E
Karaoke Revolution Party	8.0	Konami	199	E10+
Kids Next Door: Operation V.I.D.E.O.G.A.M.E.	N/A	Global Star	198	E10+
Knights of the Temple	5.0	Aspyr	194	M
Lego *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	198	E
Madagascar	6.0	Activision	194	E10+
Madden NFL 06	9.0, 8.0	Electronic Arts	195	E
Major League Baseball 2K6	7.0, 6.5,6.0	2K Sports	205	E
Mario Party 7	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Mario Superstar Baseball	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Mark Davis: Pro Bass Challenge	5.0	Natsume	198	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	7.0	Electronic Arts	197	T
Medal of Honor: European Assault	8.0	Electronic Arts	194	T
Mega Man X Collection	8.5	Capcom	200	E
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	6.5	Midway	197	E
Namco 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Naruto: Clash of Ninja	7.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	T
NBA Live 06	5.5	Electronic Arts	198	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
NHL 06	8.5	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Odama	8.5	Nintendo	203	E10+
One Piece: Grand Battle	6.5	Bandai	197	T
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E10+
Pac-Man World 3	7.0	Namco	199	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	9.0	Ubisoft	200	T
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	8.5	Nintendo	197	E
Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones	9.0	Ubisoft	200	M
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	204	E10+
Scooby-Doo!: Unmasked	7.5	THQ	197	E
Shadow the Hedgehog	8.0	Sega	199	E10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	T
Sonic Gems Collection	8.5	Sega	195	E
Sonic Riders	8.0	Sega	203	E
Spartan: Total Warrior	8.5	Sega	197	M
SSX On Tour	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Super Mario Strikers	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	8.5	THQ	197	E
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	204	E10+
Teenage Mutant Ninja turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	4.0	Konami	199	E10+
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	9.0	Activision	198	T
True Crime: New York City	8.0	Activision	199	M
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
Ultimate Spider-Man	9.0	Activision	198	T
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	6.5	Capcom	199	T
World Series of Poker	4.5	Activision	198	E10+
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	8.0	THQ	197	T
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	7.5	Activision	198	T
X-Men: The Official Game	6.5	Activision	205	T
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles	6.0	Bandai	198	T

NINTENDO DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.0	Electronic Arts	204	E
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	9.5	Nintendo	196	E
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	8.0	Majesco	201	E10+
• Animal Crossing: Wild World	9.5, 8.5	Nintendo	199	E
Battles of Prince of Persia	6.5	Ubisoft	200	E10+
Blades of Thunder 2	4.5	Summitsoft	201	E10+
Bomberman	7.0	Ubisoft	194	E
Burnout Legends	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Bust-a-Move DS	7.5	Majesco	200	E
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	9.0	Konami	197	T
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	7.0	Buena Vista	199	E10+
Dig Dug Digging Strike	7.0	Namco	198	E
Dino Master	5.5	Majesco	205	E
Dragon Ball z: Supersonic Warriors 2	5.0	Atari	199	E10+
Dragon Booster	6.0	Konami	200	E
Electroplankton	8.5	Nintendo	200	E
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
FIFA Soccer 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
FIFA Street 2	6.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
Finding Nemo: Escape to the Big Blue	5.0	THQ	202	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin's Great Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
Golden Nugget Casino DS	6.5	Majesco	201	T
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	6.0	Electronic Arts	195	T
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	N/A	Activision	201	E10+
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	7.0	Majesco	204	T
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	4.0	Vivendi	203	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	5.5	THQ	199	E10+
Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E
Kirby: Canvas Curse	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Lost in Blue	8.0	Konami	197	E10+
• LostMagic	8.0, 7.0	Ubisoft	204	E
Lunar: Dragon Song	7.0	Ubisoft	197	E10+
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Magnetica	8.0	Nintendo	205	E
• Mario Kart DS	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	5.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team DS	7.0	Capcom	198	E
Meteos	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
• Metroid Prime Hunters	8.5, 8.0	Nintendo	203	T
Metroid Prime Pinball	9.5	Nintendo	198	E
Mini RC Rally	N/A	Summitsoft	204	E
Monopoly/Boggle/Battleship	7.0	Atari	200	E
Nanostray	8.0	Majesco	195	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	6.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
New Super Mario Bros.	9.5,9.5,9.5,9.5	Nintendo	205	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Nintendogs	8.5, 8.0	Nintendo	196	E
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E
Pac-Man World 3	3.0	Namco	200	E
Pac 'N Roll	7.5	Namco	196	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	3.5	Ubisoft	200	T

REVIEWER NOTES

KILLER 7

Killer 7 dropped out of the Archive this month, marking a year since Capcom's quirky, violent, shockingly unconventional fever dream reached the GCN. The game's David Lynch-worthy imagery could both attract and repulse you, and the slow-to-unfold opening mission may make you want to reach for the power button. But if you stay with it, eventually you will be hooked by split-personality assassin Harmon Smith's gruesome tale, and first-person-shooting mechanics that build tension without causing frustration. —George S.

>YOSHI TOUCH & GO

As a touch-controlled, dual-screened, arcade-action platformer, YT&G was an insane hybrid way before its time (and widely mistaken for a platform adventure). But a year and change later, I'm an old hand at touch control and I find that YT&G is the one DS game that puts me to the test.

—Steven G.

>TETRIS DS

Does Tetris ever get old? I spent countless hours playing the Game Boy version, and I still yearn for the Russian puzzle game once in a while. Even if you played as much Tetris as I did, Tetris DS will renew your love of the game. The new modes, the nostalgic visuals, and the sweet Wi-Fi action—nothing in Tetris DS disappoints. But it's still Tetris at its core—not so much new, but definitely improved. —Andy M.

>NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.

Amid all the hullabaloo surrounding the new games and hardware on display at E3, one of the most popular topics of conversation among game journalists was the sheer awesomeness that is New Super Mario Bros. If you haven't picked it up yet, put down the magazine and run to your nearest game retailer.

—Steve T.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	8.0	Capcom	197	T
Pokémon Trozei	8.5	Nintendo	202	E
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	7.0	Namco	198	E10+
Resident Evil: Deadly Silence	8.5	Capcom	202	M
The Rub Rabbits!	8.0	Sega	201	T
SBK: Snowboard Kids	7.5	Atlus	199	E
Sega Casino	6.0	Sega	199	T
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	5.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Sonic Rush	9.0	Sega	199	E
Space Invaders Revolution	4.0	Mastiff	196	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	3.5	THQ	198	E
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	6.5	Vivendi	198	E
Super Black Bass Fishing	4.5	Majesco	204	E
Super Monkey Ball: Touch & Roll	6.5, 7.5	Sega	201	E
Super Princess Peach	7.5	Nintendo	202	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	7.5	THQ	197	E
Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop	5.0	Bandai	201	E
Tao's Adventure: Curse of the Demon Seal	6.0	Konami	203	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	6.0	Konami	198	E
• Tetris DS	9.5	Nintendo	203	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker DS	5.0	Majesco	198	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker Pack	N/A	Summitsoft	200	E
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown	6.0	Ubisoft	197	M
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	194	T
• Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	8.0	Activision	199	E
Top Gun	4.0	Mastiff	202	E10+
Top Spin 2	6.0	2K Games	200	E
Trace Memory	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	9.0	Atlus	198	T
True Swing Golf	8.0	Nintendo	201	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.5	Activision	198	E10+
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble	7.0	Capcom	198	T
Whac-A-Mole	N/A	Activision Value	197	E
Worms: Open Warfare	7.0	THQ	202	E10+
X-Men: The Official Game	7.0	Activision	205	E10+
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	8.0	Konami	196	E
Zoo Tycoon DS	7.5	THQ	197	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
2006 FIFA World Cup	7.5	Electronic Arts	204	E
Atomic Betty	N/A	Namco	198	E
ATV Quad Frenzy	N/A	Majesco	199	E
Backyard Baseball 2007	3.5	Atari	204	E
Backyard Football 2006	N/A	Atari	197	E
Backyard Skateboarding	N/A	Atari	198	E
Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus	N/A	Vivendi	197	E
Batman Begins	5.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	N/A	Namco	197	E
The Bible Game	N/A	Crave	197	E
Big Mutha Truckers	N/A	Destination	199	E10+
Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	N/A	THQ	198	E
Board Game Classics	N/A	Destination	197	E
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabbage Patch Kids: The Patch Puppy Rescue	N/A	D3PA	204	E
Candy Land/Chutes & Ladders/ Memory	N/A	Destination	200	E
Care Bears: Care Quest	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance/ Aria of Sorrow Double Pack	9.0	Konami	202	T
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	204	E
Centipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	3.5	Global Star	195	E
Chicken Little	N/A	Buena Vista	198	E
Chicken Shoot	N/A	Destination	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Connect Four Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	N/A	THQ	197	E
Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald	5.5	Capcom	194	E
DK: King of Swing	8.0	Nintendo	197	E
Dogz	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Donkey Kong Country 3	8.0	Nintendo	198	E
Dr. Mario & Puzzle League	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Dr. Sudoku	6.0	Mastiff	203	E
Dragon Ball: Advanced Adventure	7.0	Atari	203	E10+
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	5.5	Atari	196	E10+
Drill Dozer	9.0	Nintendo	201	E
Driv3r	5.5	Atari	198	T
Duel Masters: Shadow of the Code	5.5	Atari	198	E
Dynasty Warriors Advance	7.0	Nintendo	196	E10+
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
everGirl	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Clash with the Anti-World	N/A	THQ	199	E
Fantastic Four	6.5	Activision	194	E10+
FIFA Soccer 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
Final Fantasy IV Advance	9.0	Nintendo	200	E10+
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin the Turtle	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
The Game of Life/Yahtzee/Payday	N/A	Destination	200	E
Garfield and His Nine Lives	5.0	American Game Factory	204	E
Garfield: The Search for Pooky	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Gauntlet Compilation	6.5	Destination	197	E
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	N/A	Activision	200	E10+
Gumby vs. the Astrobots	5.0	Namco	196	E
Gunstar Super Heroes	9.5	Sega	198	E10+
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town	8.5	Natsume	195	E
Hello Kitty: Happy Party Pals	N/A	THQ	199	E
Herbie: Fully Loaded	5.5	Disney Interactive	194	E
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi: Kaznapped!	6.5	D3PA	199	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	4.0	Vivendi	203	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	N/A	THQ	199	E
James Pond Codename Robocod	4.0	Valcon Games	195	E
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	5.0	Orbital Media	196	E
Kim Possible III: Team Possible	6.5	Disney Interactive	195	E
KLAX Compilation	4.0	Destination	197	E
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
Kong: King of Atlantis	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Kong: The 8th Wonder of the World	6.0	Ubisoft	200	E10+
The Land Before Time: Into the Mysterious Beyond	N/A	American Game Factory	201	E
Let's Ride! Dreamer	N/A	THQ	203	E
Lizzie McGuire 3	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madagascar: Operation Penguin	N/A	Activision	199	E
Madden NFL 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Majesco's Sports Pack	N/A	Majesco	201	E10+
Mario Tennis: Power Tour	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel & Team Protoman	6.5	Capcom	194	E
Mega Man Zero 4	8.5	Capcom	198	E
Millipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	5.5	Namco	197	E
Naruto: Ninja Council	4.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	E10+
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	6.5	Buena Vista	198	E10+
One Piece	8.0	Bandai	197	E10+
Operation/Mouse Trap/Simon	N/A	Destination	200	E
Over the Hedge	3.5	Activision	205	E
Pac-Man World 2	6.0	Destination	197	E
Paperboy Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Paws & Claws Resort	N/A	THQ	203	E
Pocket Dogs	N/A	0~3	200	E
Pong Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Power Rangers: S.P.D.	4.0	THQ	196	E10+
The Proud Family	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Rebelstar: Tactical Command	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Rec Room Challenge	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Risk Compilation	7.0	Destination	197	E
Riviera: The Promised Land	6.5	Atlus	194	T
Scrabble Jr. Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	6.5	Konami	196	E10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
Sigma Star Saga	8.5	Namco	195	E10+
The Sims 2	7.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Sky Dancers	N/A	Crave	199	E
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Spy Hunter Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	5.5	Destination	201	T
Sudoku Fever	4.0	Global Star	202	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	4.0	THQ	197	E
Tales of Phantasia	8.5	Nintendo	202	E10+
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	198	E10+
Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	6.0	Activision	199	E
Top Spin 2	N/A	2K Games	200	E
Totally Spies!	5.5	Atari	201	E
The Tower SP	7.0	Sega	203	E
Tringo	N/A	Crave	200	E
Trollz: Hair Affair	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Ultimate Arcade Games	N/A	Telegames	198	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
The Wild	N/A	Buena Vista	204	E
W.I.T.C.H.	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
X-Men: The Official Game	3.5	Activision	205	E10+
Yoshi Topsy-Turvy	7.0	Nintendo	194	E
Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Duel Academy	6.0	Konami	201	E
Yu-Gi-Oh! Ultimate Masters—World Championship Tournament 2006	6.0	Konami	204	E
Zatch Bell!: Electric Arena	N/A	Bandai	198	E10+
Zooo	4.5	Ignition	196	E

>MARIO SUPERSTAR BASEBALL

Sports games are rarely as much fun in single-player mode as they are with pals, but Superstar Baseball's ability-building quest turns the season into an adventure in which baseball games take the place of boss battles.

—George S.

LOSTMAGIC

Although the DS lineup has been seriously impressive in the past year, it's not exactly overflowing with quality RPGs. As a result, I was pretty excited to get my hands on LostMagic. Sadly, though the game is packed with great ideas, it doesn't execute on them as well as it should. If you're jonesing for an RPG fix, give it a try. But let's hope another game can take those ideas and do a better job of realizing their potential. —Steve T.

>X-MEN: THE OFFICIAL GAME (GCN)

X-Men: The Official Game comes close to greatness, but little problems like unbalanced difficulty and cheap-looking cut-scenes pile up to hold it back. The boss fights in particular could have used more work.

—Chris H.

MLB 2K6

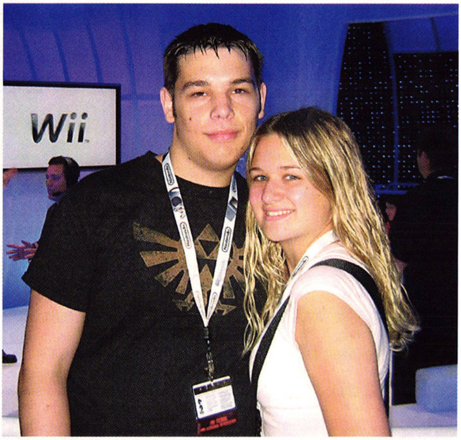
I'm a fan of baseball's intricacies, so I was really looking forward to all of the nuances that MLB 2K6 was supposed to offer. I guess I was setting myself up for a major-league letdown. I can't think of one positive experience I had while playing this game—it looks like mud and plays stiffer than a SNES baseball game. Shame on 2K Sports for taking advantage of their exclusive MLB license and producing this disappointment.

—Chris S.

EVENTS

California Dreamin'

NP showed the 2005 Power Awards Sweepstakes winner a good time at E3; somehow both parties lived to tell the story.



For every industry insider that haughtily claims every year that E3 is too loud, too crowded, and overhyped, there are about a zillion gamers who would happily take his place. And for one gamer couple, that dream trip became a reality. NP subscriber Paul Angevine was the lucky grand-prize winner of our big E3 trip sweepstakes from Vol. 201, so along with his girlfriend, Ashley, he got the chance to infiltrate the frenzied halls of the largest video game convention in the world. Paul says, "Getting to go to E3 2006 was an amazing opportunity for us. Anyone who gets to go more than once in a lifetime is lucky, even if it is for work."

Paul and Ashley spent most of the first day just walking the show floor—the game plan was to check out the whole show, then return later to the booths they wanted to see more of. Surprisingly, just to walk through all the booths took nearly the entire day; with two huge convention halls and packed crowds everywhere they went, it was no easy task to see everything. "Perhaps the only thing we didn't really like, although we expected it, were the huge crowds. The plane, E3, Los Angeles: they were all full of people everywhere and all the time," Paul noted.

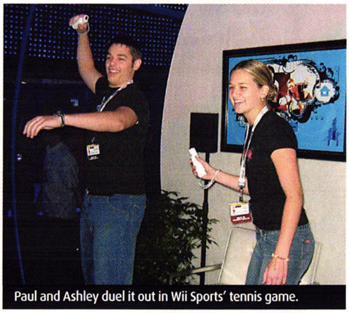
They at least got into Nintendo's Wii area for some quality hands-on time. As VIP guests of Nintendo Power, they were able to skip the brutally long lines to see the new system (although once in the special gaming area, the wait to play hot games like Zelda and Mario was still a test of patience). Paul thinks any wait would've been worth it, though: "The Nintendo booth was by far our favorite. We have been excited about The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess since it was announced, and we got our chance to play the demo! Ashley really got into Super Mario Galaxy and its crazy rotating worlds."

With a better idea of what to expect at the show, the second day went more smoothly. Paul and Ashley were able to breeze by the games they'd already seen and focus on the stuff they were most eager to play, including some of the big third-party titles. "Superman Returns looked really cool—it's free-roaming like Spider-Man 2 with that go-anywhere, do-what-you-want-to kind of feel to it. We were interested in Splinter Cell Double Agent, but didn't get a chance to actually play it because only people from Ubisoft were demoing it." They also returned to the Wii booth on the second day, but this time they got more than they bargained for: Nintendo's Rick McManus, one of the brains behind the Big N's show presence, took the winners on a special backstage tour of the booth, and admitted them to Nintendo's ultraexclusive VIP gaming area, the section usually limited to celebrities and top executives.

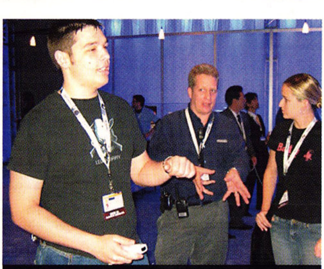
In all, for Paul and Ashley it was the trip of a lifetime. They want to share one important message: NP readers, "Don't forget to fill out those player's polls; you never know when you'll win!"

—**Chris S.**

Paul shows off his mad WarioWare Skills.



Paul and Ashley duel it out in Wii Sports' tennis game.



NOA's Rick McManus shows Paul around Nintendo's VIP gaming area.

MUSIC

Operatic Obsession

While in LA for E3, the sweepstakes winner and I had the chance to catch the Super Mario Opera at LA's famous Knitting Factory nightclub. We'd heard good things, so wanted to see the spectacle in person. We were blown away—the rockin' music and the unique take on the Mario mythology had the audience completely enthralled. After the show, we caught up to the show's talented creator and lead singer, Jonathan Mann. Mann's passion about the show is captivating—even just talking to him, you can feel his excitement. Mann developed the show while at the California Institute of the Arts, and recruited fellow students for most of the roles. He explained that the show was originally designed for larger theaters, but has been pared down gradually so they can bring their show to club venues around the country. Be sure to catch the Super Mario Opera when it comes to your town. —**Chris S.**

COSPLAY

Face Time

Paul and Ashley weren't the only superfans to make it into E3 this year: Liz, the Link cosplayer from Vol. 195's Community, and her Zelda-attired friend Jackie got a chance to attend the show and meet Zelda creator Mr. Miyamoto himself. Kudos once again on the brilliant costumes! —**Chris S.**

Liz had the opportunity to tell Mr. Miyamoto how much she's looking forward to Twilight Princess.

WEBSITES

Grrl Power

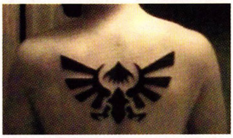
It doesn't take much investigating to conclude that the rank and file of video game journalism is almost completely male. But change is in the air—the voice of women in gaming is getting ever stronger. One website that embraces this attitude is www.grrlgamer.com, a completely independent site 100% operated by women, featuring articles written with girl gamers squarely in mind. Drop any preconceived notions now—these ladies are hard-core gamers, and they know what they're talking about. Check 'em out. —**Chris S.**

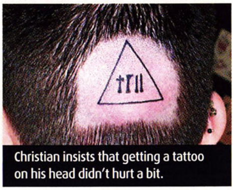
GRRLGAMER.COM
NEW GAME GIVEAWAYS!

TATTOOS

Link Ink

NP reader Christian shows off his tattoos and proves there's no such thing as going too far with Zelda fandom. The tattoo that stretches across his back comes from the image on Link's shield, and the one on his head was inspired by the cryptic writing from The Wind Waker. —**Chris S.**





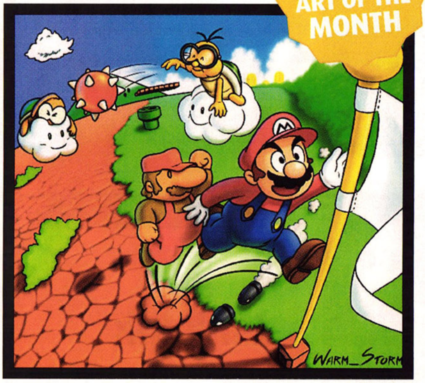
Christian insists that getting a tattoo on his head didn't hurt a bit.

ONLINE

The Big Man

Mario's gone through quite a few changes during his illustrious career. Having evolved from sparse pixels to seamless polygons, he remains one of the most-recognizable characters in video game history. This month, we dared you to capture Mario's long career in one image—and you knew how to step up to the daunting challenge.

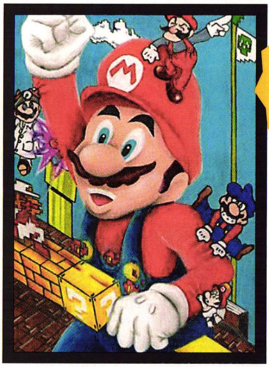
MAY'S COMPUTER-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH



ARTIST:
WARM_STORM

SUBJECT:
OLD SCHOOL VS. NEW SCHOOL MARIO

MAY'S HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH



ARTIST:
THETRUELEGEND

SUBJECT:
OLD SCHOOL VS. NEW SCHOOL MARIO

Looking to submit art for the first time, and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces.

NSider Reviews

This review is a bit longer than most of the ones we run, but we were really impressed by its composition. Future reviewers: note how Goron_of_Light focuses his review on his opinions, not just on recapping the facts.

NSider Review of the Month

Metroid Prime Hunters

reviewed by
GORON_OF_LIGHT

When Metroid Prime Hunters was announced, many Metroid fans were concerned about how sharp a turn this game would take from the norm. Their fears weren't unfounded—focusing mainly on its multiplayer aspects, the game is not as much of a Metroid-esque single-player thrill as a traditional Metroid title should be. However, the multiplayer and Wi-Fi play make MPH a decent experience.

The first barricade that players will have to break through is the untraditional, almost overly innovative control style. The stylus-based method of moving, aiming, and using weapons is unintuitive at first, but when one breaks out of the mold of traditional control style and lets the DS controls speak for themselves, the gameplay reveals itself to be much more conveniently rewarding.

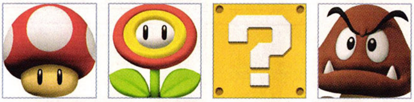
The single-player mode is much shorter and more linear than classic Metroid titles. Brief outings are limited to small planets, where the goal is usually just to get from one end to the other, gathering artifacts that grant passage to the subsequent boss battle and timed escape sequence. A detailed log book, however, brings some life to the game in the way that Metroid should.

As the game's main attraction, the multiplayer mode is very well thought out. The Wi-Fi play adds up to an endless amount of hardcore shooting action, with just enough signature Metroid features (such as the Morph Ball, and other alternate forms) to make it feel fresh. In the end, Metroid Prime Hunters isn't all that it could be, but for a game designed to let the galaxy's best hunters face each other in the ultimate battle, it's a satisfyingly thrilling experience.

Let your voice be heard!
If you'd like to submit a review for NP, first become an Nsider at Nintendo.com. Then head to the Reviews forum and submit your game critique. Reviews are selected based on overall writing quality, objectivity, and game knowledge.

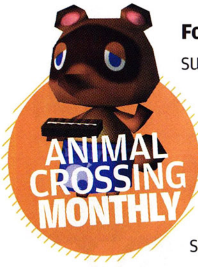
GOT THAT SPECIAL SOMETHING THAT BELONGS IN THE COMMUNITY SECTION? DROP US A LINE AT COMMUNITY@NINTENDOPOWER.COM.

Custom-Made Avatars **By Jimmy Catechi**



ANIMAL CROSSING

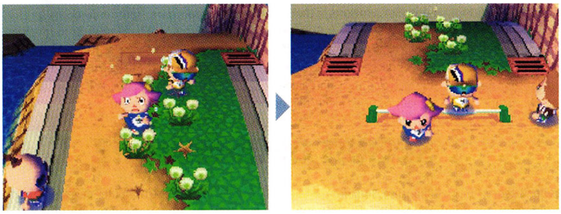
Fear Factor and Other Fun Diversions

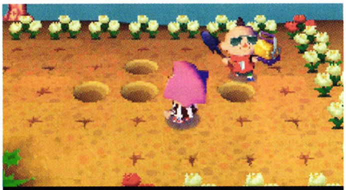


For AC fans sauntering into the lazy, hazy days of summer, we've concocted some raucous recreation to keep things interesting by turning your town into an extreme playground. All you'll need is some elbow grease and a go-getter attitude to do these landscape makeovers—plus a few ground patterns that will set the stage for cutthroat competition! —**STEVEN G.**

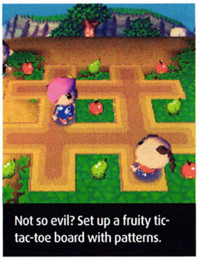
Dirty Tricks and Traps, Tics and Tacs

In our book, there's no such thing as too many pitfalls, the traps that you can plant to turn a wrong step into a buried body—especially when building a booby-trapped race course. To set up such a hazard-plagued event, first design and place ground patterns that serve as race markers and a finish line, then sink dozens of pitfalls along the way to force players to bob and weave at breakneck speed. For extra chaos, plant dandelions on the course; they'll throw up cottony tufts in the wake of the race. The town host should wait at the finish line to announce the winner—and mock all of the losers.

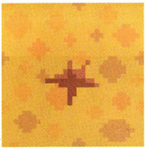




Another sadistic game is the Mostly Fake Treasure Hunt. Bury one prize, then cover the area with pitfalls and fake-buried-item patterns. Invite buds over, watch them dig, and go nuts!

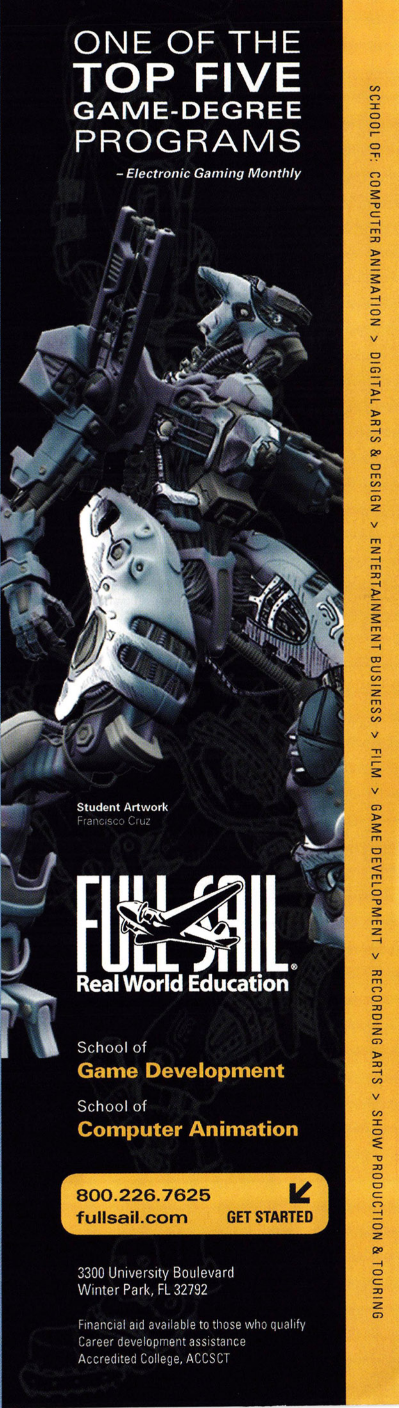


Not so evil? Set up a fruity tic-tac-toe board with patterns.



DIGGING UP THE FAKE-OUT PATTERN

You can mess with visitors' minds by decorating your landscape with a pattern that looks like the mark that signals one of three things: fossils, buried treasure, or a planted pitfall. You might get one such pattern from Wendell the walrus if you give him fish from the ocean; if you need the pattern in a hurry, use Palette 12 to create your own X that marks the spot. Oh, the fun you'll have creating a mental minefield.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15 YEARS, 16 BITS

Celebrating an incredible decade and a half of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System

The SNES gave new meaning to the phrase "sweet sixteen."

Release Date: August 1991
On-Screen Colors: 256 out of 32,768
Processor Speed: 2.68 MHz
Number of Games: 717

Remember when game systems actually came with two controllers?

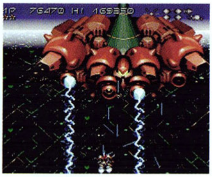
For the gamers who experienced it firsthand, it's hard to believe how much time has passed since Nintendo dropped its 16-bit bomb in North America, but it's true—this August marks 15 years since the release of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System. The 16-bit wars were already raging between the Sega Genesis and NEC's TurboGrafx-16 (with Sega decisively cleaning NEC's clock), but when the Super NES entered the fray, it elevated the battle for video game supremacy to a whole new level. Boasting more colors, better resolution, the ability to put more sprites on the screen, fancy new effects like background scaling and rotation (also known as Mode 7), a more advanced controller, and—most importantly—launch games like Super Mario World, Pilotwings, Sim City, and F-Zero, the SNES was a force to be reckoned with. Although the system had to contend with two years' worth of installed Genesis owners, the SNES established itself as the premiere system of the 16-bit era through a flood of fantastic original games (like Star Fox), new chapters of hit series (Contra III, for example), and ports of the day's hottest arcade titles (such as Street Fighter II).

Since the biggest names of the SNES's reign—the Marios, the Zeldas, the Metroids, the Final Fantasys—have already received plenty of time in the limelight, the NP staff decided to celebrate the system's anniversary by selecting their personal picks for great games that have been underrated or overlooked. Read on to unearth the treasures that no 16-bit enthusiast should be without.

AXELAY

Developer: Konami
Publisher: Konami
Release Date: September 1992
Shots Fired: 770,234

For my money, there's simply no better shooter than Axelay on the Super NES. By alternating between traditional side-view stages and faux-3-D behind-the-ship levels, Konami managed to craft a game that took full advantage of the SNES's graphic capabilities and offered just the right amount of variety. The ability to choose your weapons before each stage added a perfect dose of strategy, and 16-bit-era bosses don't get any more menacing—or impressive. If you beat Axelay three consecutive times (once on each difficulty setting), a message appeared that promised an Axelay 2. C'mon, Konami . . . we're still waiting! —**Chris H.**

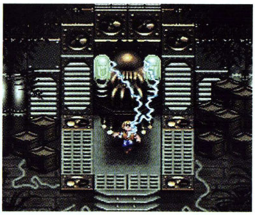


So . . . what is an Axelay, anyway?

SECRET OF EVERMORE

Developer: Square
Publisher: Square
Release Date: October 1995
Cornball Jokes: 143

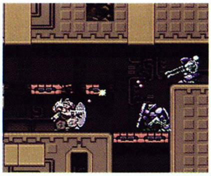
Square's Super NES RPGs (the Final Fantasy titles, Chrono Trigger, Secret of Mana) were heart-rending emotion-heavy epics of the highest order. That opera scene in FFIII still gives me chills. For Secret of Evermore, Square's only stateside-developed title of the Super NES era, the development team (for which I was the writer) went for the funny, and I believe that our story about a time-traveling boy and his dog hit the mark more often than not. The game, which was one of the first to use computer-developed graphics (for its boss battles), put a light spin on a serious genre. It didn't make anyone cry, but I hope that it made more than a few people hold their sides while laughing. —**George S.**



METAL WARRIORS

Developer: LucasArts
Publisher: Konami
Release Date: April 1995
Badass Robots: 6

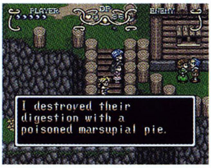
Though it sounds like the name of a campy metal band, Metal Warriors was actually a late-generation SNES title that slipped well under the mainstream radar. The mech-based shooter put you in the side-scrolling shoes of Stone, a warrior battling for the survival of the war-torn Earth of 2102 by commandeering giant robots. The single-player campaign is arcade-style to the core, and about as challenging as they come—but it's the split-screen multiplayer mode that makes Metal Warriors a classic. You'll be hooked before you know what hit you—Metal Warriors is pure old-school fun. —**Andy M.**



ILLUSION OF GAIA

Developer: Enix/Quintet
Publisher: Nintendo
Release Date: September 1994
Fabio Look-Alikes: 1

A perfect linear adventure-RPG, Gaia stood out among the 400 existing SNES games by combining progressively challenging puzzles and bosses, telekinetic powers, and entertaining dialogue with voyages to such real-world wonders as Angkor Wat (charmingly misspelled in the game) for 60 hours of gameplay. The graphics were exquisite, although more timelessly executed in the Larai Cliffs' stone faces than in the Mode 7 world-map effects. Harking back to Soul Blazer, the first game in the series, the hero used Psycho skills (what I wouldn't give to Psycho-Dash to work in the morning). And could you ever tire of transforming demure hero Will into beefy Fabio-wannabe Freedan? —**Jessica J.S.**

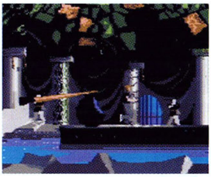


I destroyed their digestion with a poisoned marsupial pie.

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Developer: Delphine Software
Publisher: Interplay
Release Date: November 1992
Sega CD-Exclusive Sequels: 1

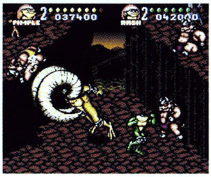
Though essentially a puzzle-platformer in the vein of the original Prince of Persia, Out of This World was truly unique for its time, with a rich, moody atmosphere and cinematic flair that drew me into its world like no game had before. I felt emotionally invested in the fates of protagonist Lester Knight Chaykin and his alien companion, and the game's somber ending remains one of my favorites to this day. Amazingly, Out of This World was essentially developed by a single person, Eric Chahi, who later went on to direct what was arguably the PlayStation's most underrated game, Heart of Darkness. —**Steve T.**

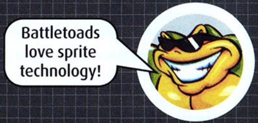


BATTLETOADS IN BATTLEMANIACS

Developer: Rare
Publisher: Tradewest
Release Date: June 1993
Number of times you gonna die: A lot

In the SNES follow-up to the popular Rare-developed Battletoads for the NES, you once again took control of giant, bipedal, pugilistic amphibians named Rash and Pimple. They were on a quest to rescue their toad pal Zitz and a daughter of a famous scientist from the clutches of an evil genius. Yes, it's weird, but what makes the Battletoads series so memorable is the brutal difficulty, and Battlemaniacs is no different: It's hard. Really hard. The combination of tough side-scrolling brawler and tricky platformer puts it in the upper echelon of difficult games, and that's where I like it. —**Chris S.**

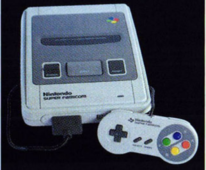



Battletoads love sprite technology!

SUPER OVERSEAS

NICE CURVES

Nearly a year before the SNES was released in North America, it debuted in Japan as the Super Famicom. Although the insides were nearly identical, the Japanese system featured a more rounded design than the SNES. Note the logo on the system's upper-right corner.



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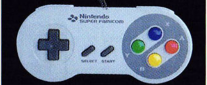

Instead of two shades of purple buttons, the Super Famicom controller featured four colored buttons (as reflected in the logo).

IMPORT ONLY

Super Famicom cartridges had a different configuration from SNES ones, so they wouldn't work in the North American system. Some games, like Final Fantasy V and Mega Man & Bass, didn't make it to SNES.

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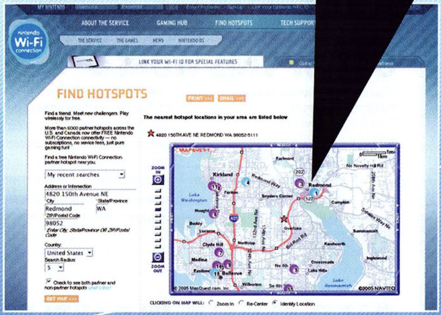
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September 2006 Vol. 207

NEXT MONTH

Kooky critters, space hunters, and a record-breaking running back—our next issue has something for everyone.

ECLECTIC BOOGALOO

What does limbless lad Rayman and his warped wardrobe (with the dance moves to match) have to do with a band of bloodthirsty bunnies? We'll connect the dots and dish more details on Rayman: Raving Rabbids in a feature preview.

STEEL REVEAL

You've read about Ubisoft's Red Steel for Wii already, but there's much more to the story. We'll have new revelations and exclusive screens next issue.

MAKING MAGIC

Nintendo is bringing legendary developer Brownie Brown's DS adventure Magical Vacation to North America. We'll introduce characters, story, and details on multiplayer Amigo dungeon mode in a huge game overview.

CURSE KILLER

MVP Shaun Alexander is the Madden NFL 07 cover athlete. Will he reverse the Madden curse? With the game's lead blocker control, he has a chance. We'll discuss.

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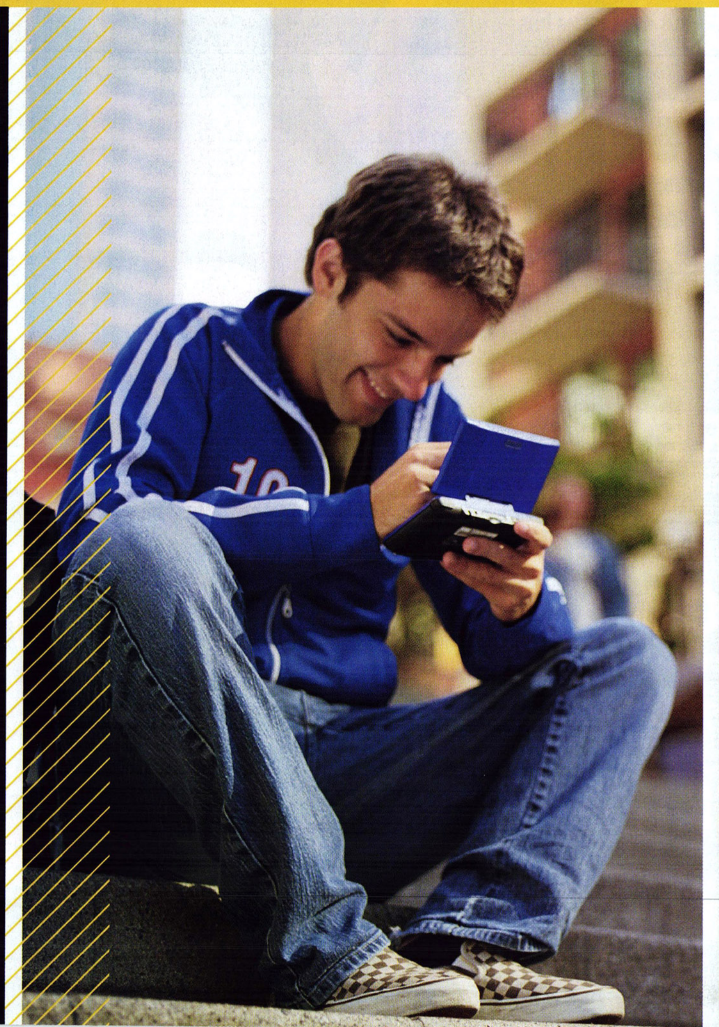

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JUMP FOR JOY!
And find out how New Super Mario Bros. will define what's old-school, what's new, what's hot, and what's cool in our exclusive hands-on preview

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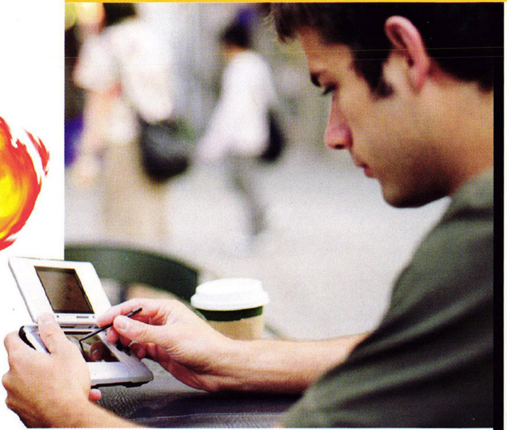

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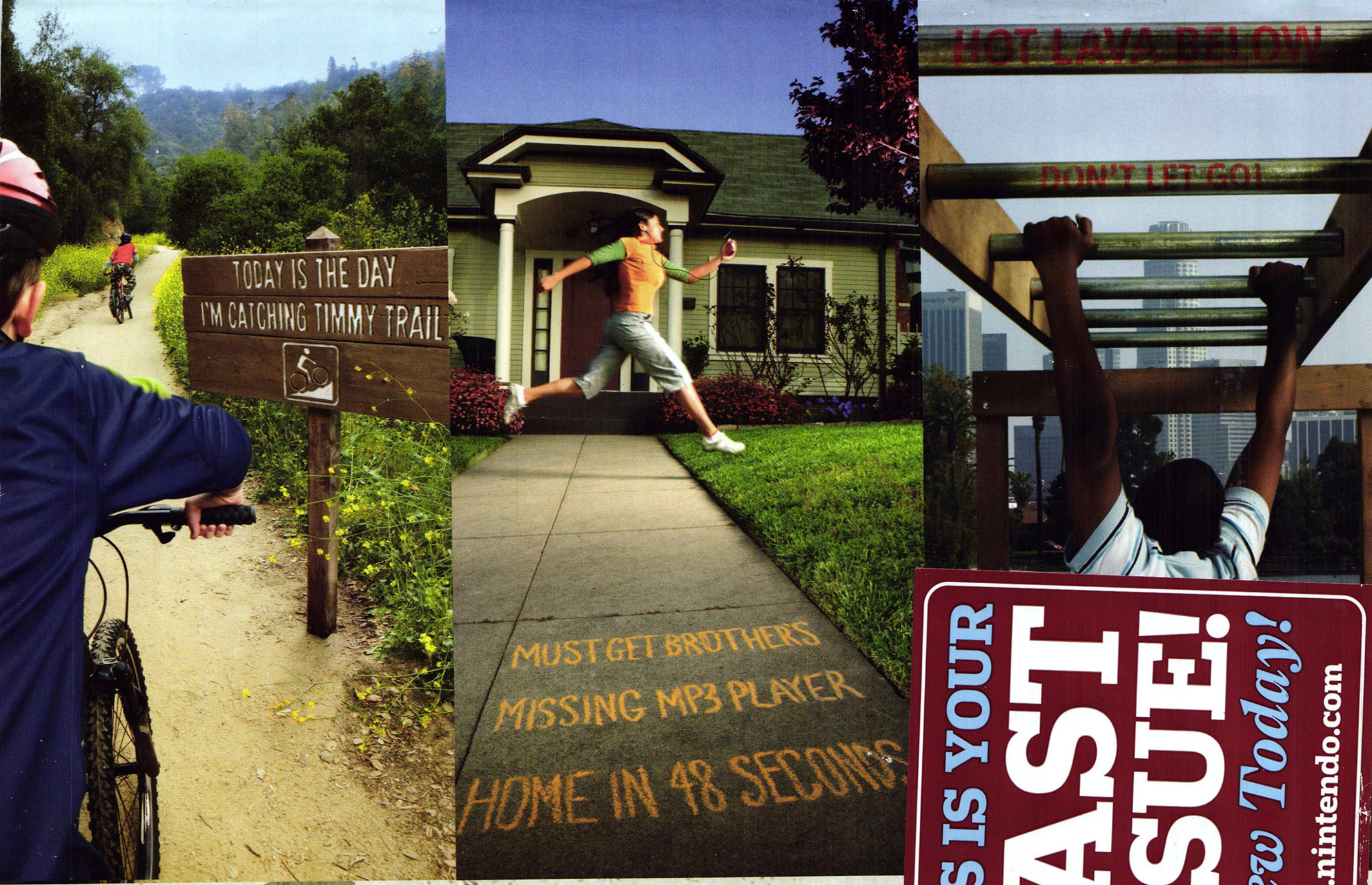
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